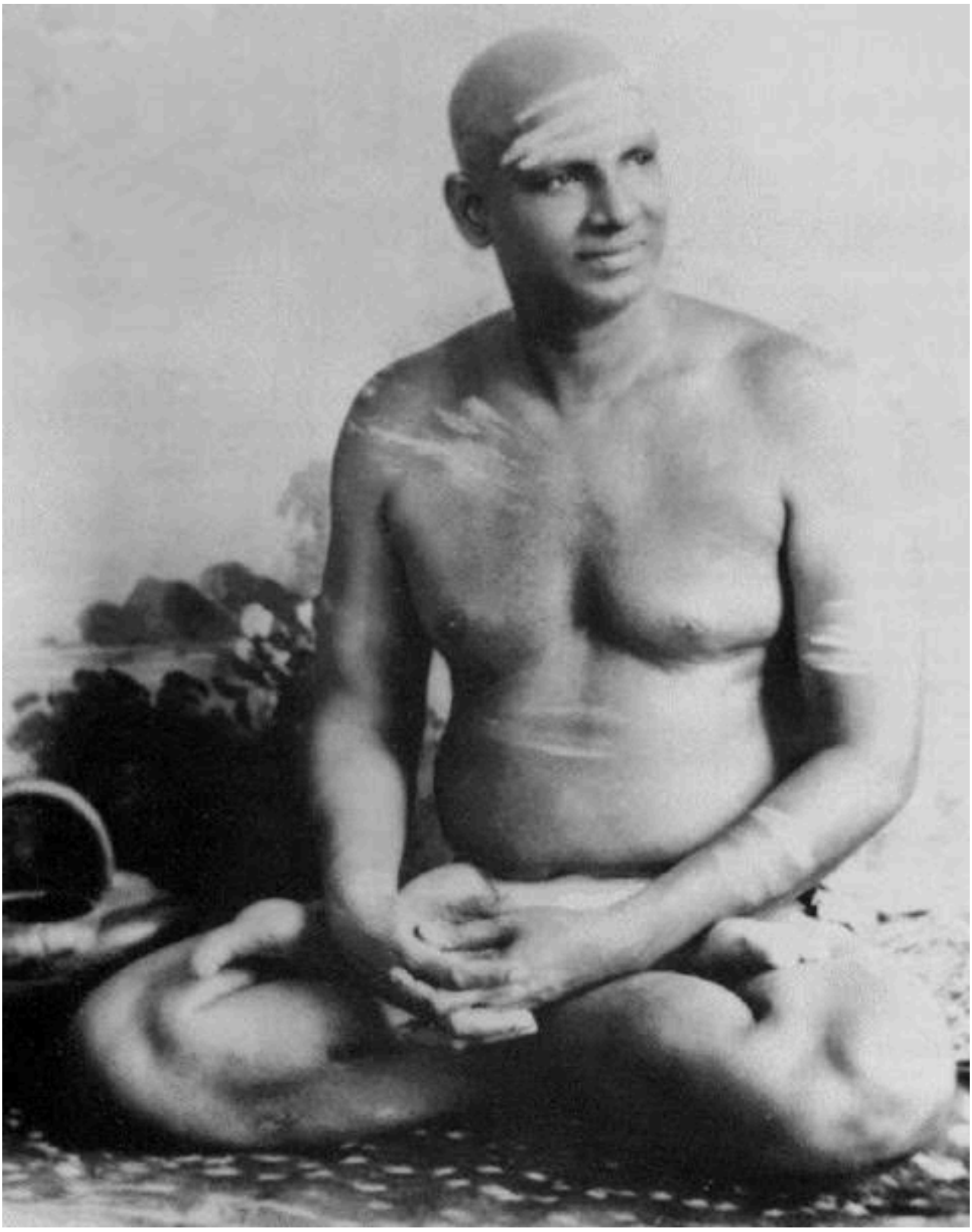
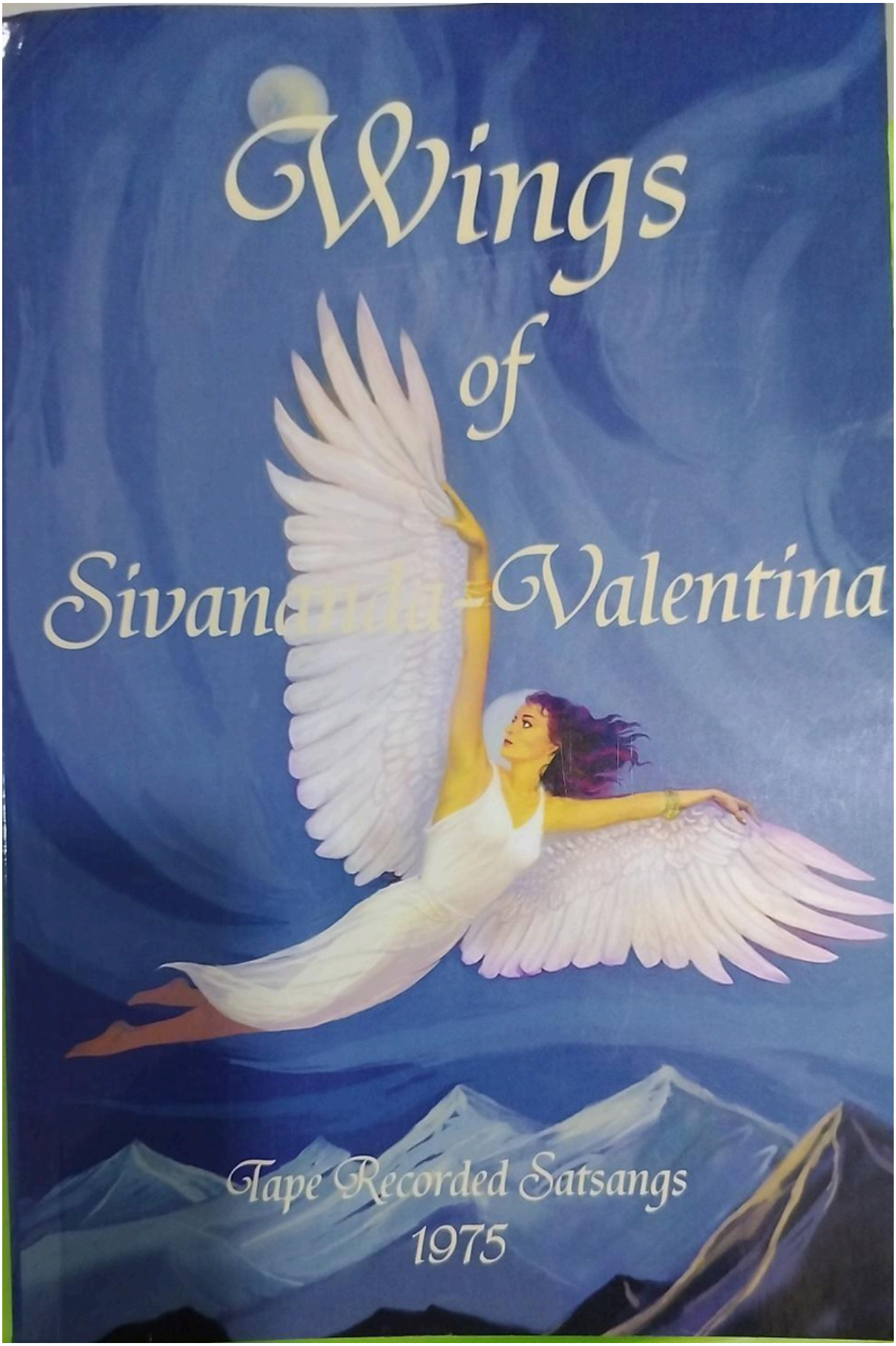


Wings of Sivananda-Valentina



Tape Recorded Satsangs
1975

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Sivananda-Valentina

iUniverse, Inc.

New York Lincoln Shanghai

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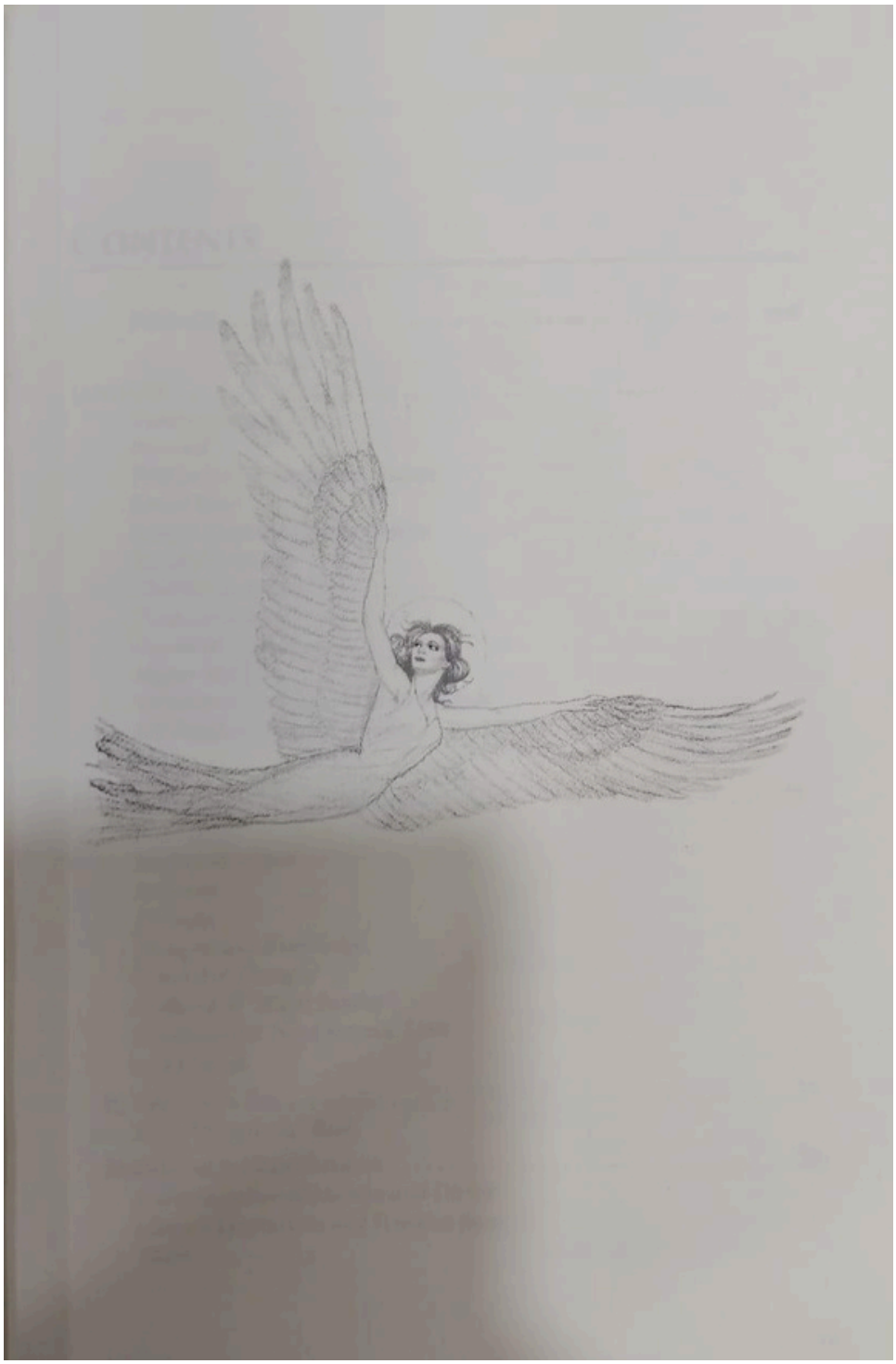
Published, Photographed and Designed By the Ashram of...

"The Light of Sivananda-Valentina"

Ashram Artist: Jack Phelan

ISBN13: 9780595375349 (pbk)
ISBN13: 9780595675210 (cloth)
ISBN13: 9780595819270 (ebk)
ISBN10: 0595375340 (pbk)
ISBN10: 0595675212 (cloth)
ISBN10: 0595819273 (ebk)

Printed in the United States of America



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FOREWORD

It is not an easy task to capture the essence of Sivananda-Valentina. Human mind refuses to comprehend the depth of Her Life.[2] Indeed, She is not only a scholar, a philosopher, an intellect, a poet, an artist, She is all these but so much more!

She shares Her Heart and Wisdom with a group of devotees and students who seek to expand their consciousness through the practice of spiritual disciplines and partaking of the Yoga at Her Retreat, The Light of Sivananda-Valentina.

Sivananda-Valentina never exposed Herself to the wide public nor was She accessible to the popular movements. In the past fifteen years Sivananda-Valentina has lived an absorbed inner life, creating Her own Synthesis of Yoga and in an unusual way culminating Her exquisite artistic and spiritual background. She entered silently into the inner world, dismissing completely the distractions of not only the outer society and glamour, but even Her arts. Yet aesthetics continued to be Her background, differently exposed and offered...now it is only for the "gods," never just for man! In order to grasp Her one has to grasp the essence of the "shiny ones."

Sivananda-Valentina remains poised in quality, style, tone, stress! Equally advanced with whomever comes Her way! Uneducated, semieducated, educated; those who seek as well as just curious; fulltime aspirant or a devotee; contact with every possible mentality is encompassed by Her incredible range. One soon discovers that Her scope is so vast and so fiery that it is often imperative that She reduce Her intense vibrations "to meet the common man comfortably." Her "musicality in life," Her indescribable rainbow of personalities and voices, Her subtle use of humour and mime when lifting a confused or dull student out of the cloudy atmosphere of metaphysical and psychological speculations, Her universality and genius in every realm conceivable, is beyond comprehension. She brings education, culture, art and beauty into the lives of those in which it is lacking, expands where there are limitations., provides depth where there is shallowness, and the select few She moulds into spiritual receptacles for the better, newer age. For the spiritual soul, then, the exquisite Satsangs with Valentina speak beyond the word; they reveal a heart so ardent and humble, so sweet and pure, so wise and compassionate...the Golden Heart of Sivananda-Valentina.

"Wings" continues the recent series of very unusually born publications which were not written; they were the captured flow of the most spontaneous and inspired talks of Sivananda-Valentina. What is offered in these pages, even as in previous publications, ("1973 with Sivananda-Valentina" and "1974 with Sivananda-Valentina") is a rendering of the essence of the kindling spiritual Satsangs which have been taperecorded and then transcribed at the requests of Her admirers and followers so that others can share the blessing which till now only a few were privileged to partake of.

In many respects, to speak about days, months and years when one shares life with a divinely absorbed Soul is an illusion. Truly, for those who sincerely seek, years are lived in days, and lifetimes in years. No gratitude is a sufficient gratitude to our Holy Mother who gives us the "wings to soar!"

Jack Phelan

[2] *The use of capitalization when referring to Sivananda-Valentina reflects the deeply rooted reverence of Her devotees.*



Sivananda-Valentina

JANUARY

Om Shanti. God bless you.... Happy New Year!

Student: I want to bow and prostrate to the Divine Guru who invokes the Grace of God upon all of us. I feel the Saraswati Sakti working through Sivananda-Valentina!

Valentina: It is fine that you know of Mother Saraswati. You should remember that Saraswati stands for commencement, for culture, for wisdom, for purity, for knowledge! Every new beginning should be dedicated to Saraswati. She is the Force of benevolence. It is all the same God in many forms. So it is good that you mention Saraswati. God bless you. May She bless your New Year! When I say "Happy New Year" I am smiling within myself; there is no such thing. But there can be a Blessed New Year. I have been stressing the reason so often that there is no need for elaboration. There can be a blessed new beginning. So for that we shall pray.

And perhaps you will make a little resolve now: not to waste this day at least, the first of January. Try not to mar this particular "first," this particular day! Just know that everything you touch should be blessed, every little thing. By the way, you either curse a thing or you bless a thing by how you look at it, by how you touch it, by how you understand it. So when you are doing something unpleasant and you will have to do a lot of unpleasant things every day bless them. Bless everybody who curses you or who offends you or who annoys you. Give him an orchid!... [A situation just occurred in which Valentina did that gave an orchid)

We all are as young as our capacity to start anew. Various opportunities only test our ability to start anew. To start what anew? Certainly not business, certainly not our adjustment to society or to our work, although for the mundane businessman his business is the only reality. Spiritual man makes his business with the Spiritual Realm. He takes January, for instance, and says, "Well...l prepare for the new way. So throughout these days of January I am going to remind myself about the renewal." [Pause] Now suppose you will stress the renewal throughout the whole month. Not "rejuvenation"...[smiling) that is April's business! But renewal! You are renewing the previous twelve months into the coming new twelve months. Renewal... that is a good one! It means that you are not accepting your defective mentality. To start anew is to be

wiser, to be nearer to God, to be cleaner, to be aright this is the resolve, the aspiration of every aspirant after Truth.

There is nothing permanently valuable in this life...although there are many temporary, little fleeting values which we neither should belittle nor omit nor overlook nor shun (I'm all for them), but which are only half values. The only permanent value is the enlarging of your consciousness. It is most enchanting to discover the subtler values; it is a fascinating journey. Can you imagine, there is such vastness as Infinity!

What is the difference, 1974 or '75 or 2000...really where is this difference? Rubbish! But every year has a significance when you live it; it has no significance when you just drag through it. So that is what it is. Every year is very, very, very important if you take this life as the journey towards freedom, towards knowledge and wisdom. Take every opportunity which leads you upwards. You cannot really get anything unless you make an effort and unless you struggle...till you do not have to struggle you will just sing! We can make the whole year unto that spirit and of that significance carry with us that aspiration till we will not have to divide years, till our life is a new life a WHOLE life!

Om the Renewal in January!

***

Student: Guru, being the beginning of the New Year, I really want to make it new, I really want to start! But truthfully, I don't understand why Sadhana is stressed so much.
Valentina: To tell you candidly, your remark about the Sadhana diminished the first impression you made upon me. I was hoping Sadhana is an axiom for every seeker.
Student: Sorry to disappoint You, Guru.

Valentina: How can you want the improvement and yet omit the way towards it?! Sadhana, or the protracted self-discipline, is an absolute must because there should be a harmonious continuity of self effort till you will outgrow the "natural man" and will transcend his emotional and mental standards.

Student: Not that I don't want to, but the "natural man" wouldn't let me. Is that "natural man" the lower vital?
Valentina: Yes, some schools call it so. You are at the mercy of the vital desire. Alas, you lament about misdeeds only too late, after you have a fall, rather than to be cautious before. Well, this which causes it is your undisciplined lower vital. Is it clear?

Student: This part is clear. But why is it that it is so difficult to control the lower vital?

Valentina: Because the higher is not established! There is a very low, dense force which is the author of your appetites, unhandsome appetites. In every human being there is such part. It is extremely greedy. "More! More!" Whatever, but it has to be more! You are not satisfied. You might have everything, you might have health; you might have wealth; you might have love, but you want more. You want more of the same. It is not that you do not have it, but there is a part of you which is greedy that craves perpetually.

This force is a perverse force; it is an ugly force which wants the things that are not rational, for it wants to live but has no intelligence. It wants just to have the things the way a brat wants it...just wants it and that's all. "I want the moon; let me eat the moon." Well, that is what this force wants! In other words, it is, if I may, an "atavistic" force; it has no place in human evolution. It is dark, blind, ignorant. It has no reason but it has life. While it lives in man it borrows a little bit of, not intelligence it is not intelligent but an impetus from the mind. It is a pal of the lower mind. So they go together just like so showing by mime how they go!) embracing each other. And when you crave, for instance, alcohol, or sex, or you want the perverse sex, or you want dope, or you want to indulge in smoking, or you want to injure somebody, or you want whatever is ugly, irrational, absurd know for sure that it is that damn blind force which makes you do it. You are not able even to repent after committing the sin because it takes completely over.

That is why it is called vital, because it is vital! It is very strong, much stronger than your poor intellect and much stronger than your very poor will, that is for sure! It is just like an animal which you fed too well and discovered that it is stronger than you. It is wild and powerful and very unruly! It has the teeth; it has the claws; it has the muscles which you do not have. If you could manage it let it be strong! But you can't. For your own misfortune, you have nourished this beast for a long time this lower vital, this desire body. It brings to you all kinds of funny things. It is supported from so many sides. It is supported from the astral spheres, and actually thrown upon you. You are terrified in the higher aspect of your being, yet this lower is more vital than your higher, in most cases anyhow. But the one who has conscience, the one who has finer fibre within him, he does not like the down pull at all! He suffers because of it, yet the pull exists nevertheless. It exists; it is there. It is a good sign when you suffer, but you have to conquer the beast and to rejoice! Student: Are all desires to be considered the property of the lower vital and thus rejected?

Valentina: Not necessarily! You know very well that there are "legal" and "illegal" desires. The lawful needs are to be respected. The carnal desires ruthlessly annihilated. You are

hungry, you want to eat; it is your lawful need. That is how you maintain your body at this stage of your evolution. You have to eat and you have to eat good food. But if you become a glutton or develop excessive greed for food or even undue interest for it, the need becomes an unlawful desire. [Pause) [Smiling] I dare say, it would be more glorious to survive on the rays of the sun and a gulp of clean air but alas, in Kali Yuga man depends on food! Student: What is the difference between the need and the craving for sex?

Valentina: Man does not need sex; really and truly, he does not. It is the mind, the erotic mind, which wants it. Sex is neither good nor bad but thinking makes it so. Sex, as reproduction, is just a necessity of nature. But sex as an indulgence is the result of the imaginings of the mind, of the cravings of the mind, and brings with itself a train of falsifications. Student: Why do sex affairs leave us so frustrated at times disgusted?

Valentina: It's good you specified and called the thing the right name! "Sex affair!" How can you expect a human being to be satisfied with something subhuman?! Obviously animal indulgence should leave man dissatisfied.

Student: But sex is closely connected with emotions. Valentina: Right. Even an animal is licking the mate and all that, and wagging the tail. There is an emotion for the time being when the urge is there. Well, in human being the animalistic tendencies are covered up by imaginary emotions and by the decorated emotions. Human emotions are all mixed up, and one superimposes upon another! If man feels, for instance, affectionate to somebody, the sex impulse starts just to reflect it very automatically, strangely and very stupidly indeed! It is just the degenerate race condition, you see. You may have the superimposition even when the sex is absolutely dormant and is not at all involved. Even when there is a description let's say in literature or in a picture or in nature, in whatever depiction of something appealing to the senses sex impulse or even sex urge, often reflects the emotion. It reflects it automatically, because since times immemorial the emotion, the response or the reaction upon something pleasurable was intensely connected with the sex all kinds of appealing environments, appealing appearances, "sex appeal" and all that, you understand?

Student: Yes, Ma'am.

Valentina: And that's why these regions, the lower region of the body, is mechanically responding to it! It is just like the saliva starts to secrete when somebody mentions the dish which you like best. The same thing, the very same! But because man's intellect is totally perverse now, but totally, he does not even notice this semblance.

Student: But why is it so automatic?

Valentina: Because an ordinary man overlooks that every part of his being lives its independent life indeed, a very dark life. This is not to be ashamed of or horrified about, but understood. Now, if you do understand it, then even if this impulse continues, you regard it as if "not yours" you are registering it as if somebody else's; you are just witnessing it as a fact. It belongs to the sick humanity and you are afflicted because you, when taking your body at birth, are also taking upon yourself everything which is connected with humanity at large. It is all, in the small, miniature form, reflected in each individual, the whole Cosmos with its subhuman, with its human, with its super human and it has to be understood as such. Now all those forces are playing within the human being, and if his higher will and higher mind are not developed, he just gives in to it. But if developed, he watches, he observes, and...if they are developed VERY MUCH, HE REJECTS IT! But still, it knocks, it kicks, it even invades. But it does not matter to him, just as it does not matter when you see a strange dream. You do not believe your irrational dream, do you! Do you understand me?

Student: Yes, Ma'am, indeed I do, and I appreciate the new impact.

Valentina: That's what it is. In every mechanistic, invasive, irrational reflex life, be it emotional, be it sexual, be it mental, such invasive impulses have to be understood and rejected. When they are understood and rejected, you are not their victim any longer; there are no after effects. They can knock, they can suggest themselves any amount of times, but as long as you know they are rubbish and they are disease, you protect yourself against them as you protect yourself from other bacilli. You are not going to be ashamed if the coughing starts knocking in your chest, are you! You cleanse, you take the vaporizer, hot peppermint tea, and finally you suck the honey candy. But indeed you do not perversely encourage the cough! But when it is not understood and not rejected, you are a victim; you live it; you are at its mercy; you suffer much. You are really a madman, but alas, such madness is totally accepted at times even eulogized in arts.[3]

Student: That feeling of being ashamed is it unhealthy to be ashamed?

Valentina: Well, if you wouldn't have the sense of shame, you would be the beast. The beast is not ashamed when he tears your throat, is he? But there can be a pathological shame and there can be a healthy shame.

Student: Ahh, that 'a what I wanted to say, that's what I wanted to ask! Where is the demarcation? Sometimes I feel ashamed of myself and yet I continue to feel the desire for a certain object or thing which I don't consider right.

[3]

For more on eulogy of negative emotions in arts, see June.

Valentina: Well, you answered it yourself. The sense of shame of something unworthy is healthy. But to be ashamed and simultaneously crave that which makes you ashamedis sickness.

Student: Should I be ashamed of sex urge?

Valentina: Why should you? [Laughter] Nothing is "shameful" and everything is a sheer pleasure in the life of a healthy animal...but do you want to admit that you are only a beast?! Hence the complex.

Student: You said everything clearly, but may I be bold enough and ask a slightly personal question?

Valentina: Go ahead, be bold.

Student: I feel that You personally...uh...ah...(Laughter]

Valentina: Now what do you feel so personally? That I don't care for sex? You are right. I don't!

Student: Uh...ah...uh...

Valentina: So?! Continue, finish your sentence. What is it? You are afraid to say that Valentina thinks your sex is much overrated?!

Student: [Promptly] Well, what can You offer instead?!

Valentina: [Seriously] Love. I offer you love instead of sex. Not the belles lettres and not the sex surrogates, sentimentally labeled as "love," but actually being the same "sex affairs." I am not a votary of self deception.

Student: Well, then are You a votary for sublimation

Valentina: [Laughs) Another lie? Don't you have enough lies?

Student: [Looks stupefied) What? Sublimation a lie?

Valentina: Now think: you don't call it "sublimation" when you stop being fond of drinking the blood of an animal?! You are on a different rung and you are "rechannelled," but really not through artificial sublimation. A glass of blood is not in your menu any more! It is absolutely impossible! You outgrew the cannibalism. Sublimation is the result of refinement, my Child. You are refined, you are sublimated. You are gross and crude and rude, you cannot sublimate, regardless how hard you may try. Reasoning won't bring you sublimation. There were cases when the most "sublimted" were thrown into absolutely rude and sudden sexuality through sudden provocation and the onrush of the suppressed (not really transcended) sex urge. I once told you Tolstoi's story Father Sergius. Well...

Student: If even those who were the examples of seeming... [Hesitates]

Valentina: Seeming mastery over sex?

Student: Uhhu! If even they fail when...

Valentina: When? Let us call a spade a spade when hungry. Yes, continue.

Student: Well then, what is the way, the technical way towards mastery?

Valentina: Please spare me! It is not "technical." And there are no prescriptions. It is the heightening of your consciousness which has to be and not the artificial imaginary dreams. Unless you have purity of heart, all the sublimation business is nonsense.

Icannot but wonder about Arunagiril People, who are immersed in the consequences of sexual corruption, can be consoled by the miraculous life of Arunagiri. He, indeed, can sympathize with all afflicted with sex mania. Pray to him! He is the best advocate to Lord Skanda![4]

...abused sex, when looked upon from that transparent and giddy height, is just like the disease horrible, horrible disease. It is a psychological disease. It is not only the abnormal involvement of an individual, but in general the whole mankind is afflict by it! It is very pathetic to grasp the whole thing really, to understand the hidden force fully interesting too.

The human mind, instead of going upward, began to step down and to cooperate with the animal life, which without the human mind does a very good job for it is not severed from nature. Man is severed from nature and not attached to the gods, and therefore, he simply is at loss, is in confusion, in degeneration. Therefore, when we hear the clarion call of the Avataras or of anybody who reflects Them, it is to call man upwards because he is through with the animal evolution. He has to take the new course. And that is what, in the esoteric doctrine is called, to "enter the Path." To enter the Path is to say goodbye to your animal evolution. It is no more; you are through; you are now a biped; you are no more on your fours! You have to start looking up. Don't forget your body is vertical, not horizontal, thus, noblesse oblige!

Student: Valentina, in all honesty, life without sex affairs see, I don't want to annoy You I won't call it what it is not...

Valentina: Well, thank you for that! You at least admit there is no Romeo in you and you just want sex affairs, is that it?

Student: I want to be honest, and I see how people outside the Ashram have their fun and pleasures; some have higher goals, too. But I want to say, are alive and happy in their way. You are... living above.... Is not your way of life only for

You? Maybe for those like You, whom I never met. But it is not for ordinary people.
Valentina: Live the way you care! I don't ever pull anybody to live the way I

do. But, I know certain things to be true, and if some care to listen and apply they are welcome. If not, they are better off in their sex life, their fun, pleasure and...their letdowns too.

Ask yourself one question, try to answer it honestly and seriously: do you find a lasting satisfaction in not only vulgar sex but even in romantic, well decorated excitements? You may expand and add another question: do you find lasting satisfaction in any pleasure, be it of higher or of lower quality? All people want the abundant life, pleasures, plenty, fulfillment! And everyone is "alive" and aglow during the temporary upliftment. But then what is next? Do you continue to be happy? Will you kindly answer in "utmost honesty" that is how you labeled your question!

4

For further material on Lord Skanda and Arunagiri, see November.

Student: It sure wears out. But still it's a lift!

Valentina: I want you to learn not how to be "lifted" and then be dropped down! I want you to know that there is the invigorating and inspiring way of life without the letdowns. I want you to learn certain principles of life which, if practiced, will not leave you a frustrated runner, ever hunting for some morsel.

It is not to shun life; it is to bring new interest into it. This new interest can be acquired not through politics, art, science, money and sex, etc., which are the main stimulators, but through learning your "inner machinery," through constant self-improvement, Self-discovery and Self-knowledge. The average man, and even the outstanding one, thinks he knows the answers! The average man thinks it is a "sex affair"; the outstanding man thinks it is his religion or art or political system, but no one knows, except the one who grows in

Self-knowledge daily and hourly. If you stop this growth, or if you've never started it you are living in vain, nay, you don't live at all! You are old and worn-out from your birth, throughout your semi existence and into the final departure.

***

Man, every man, creates the world. So the aspirant world, those who want to do something about their lives, have to watch, not so much the world, but themselves. Watch yourself through the world the world mirrors you. How do you behave visàvis this, that and that? That is the way to tell yourself. You can sit down in the Sanctuary and heighten your vibrations, and you are all honest people as far as taking seriously that which is given. However, the moment you are out of the Sanctuary, the moment you are facing the world and are confronted with some opposition or temptation or provocation, you lose all the fine aspirations of the Sanctuary. Then you may either talk unnecessarily, or you acquire the artificial mannerisms, etc., etc. Well, that is precisely what you should not do! But rather, take this moment of provocation for stopping and thinking. If you do not stop at that moment and do not think, that old habit will be left the way it was and the way it still is. Student: But Guru, while amidst the worldly contacts, how can one stop and think?

Valentina: I do not mean to literally "stop" and literally "think." But it is a principle of never to hurry to utter things thoughtlessly. And "stop and think" is not only apropos controlling the impulsive word, but it is, in general, not to be swayed by the play of the forces around us. When you are affronted, when you are opposed, when you are provoked stop and think is the possibility to give yourself a rest, even!...not to go into the resentment, not to go into criticism, not to go into, above all, hurt feelings, but stop and think and benefit and purify yourself, just as you do when you give your body a chance to stop and assimilate. Stop and think is assimilate that which you hear here. Assimilate that which you study, assimilate that which you pray for. In other words, apply. Stop and think mentally apply that which you subscribe to in theory; then you are practicing what you are learning. Otherwise, it is nothing.

That, by the way, shows if you really are changing towards the better or not, towards the Divine, from really diabolical. A man who is changing and progressing he is very vigilant and he does not make a strain, "I trrry!" No, no. He naturally notices those things and naturally stops and thinks. You see? But if it is artificial, "Oh, I better stop, I better think," you never will!

...I will share a secret: if you are somewhat indifferent to general temptations; if you are not too interested in such forces as ambition, pride and possessiveness, you really don't need to stop and think, for you are out of the game all of the time.

Student: But Guru, until we have that indifference, would I be correct to say that the job of the aspirant is to watch the lower instincts?

Valentina: Do not go constantly into the watching of the lower instincts! Don't forget that there is also the higher life. There is something else within you which takes you to the Divine. You would not be sitting here at this late hour with me in the Sanctuary if you would not want the higher, purer life.

So there is that war within every human being: the impulse to go down the desire of the vital, lower, wild vital and the aspiration to go up. Mark well...I say aspiration, not desire to go up. There is no such thing as desire to evolve. No

one wants to "go up." But there is an aspiration and inspiration which prompts man to stop and go up to start climbing. The chaotic force cannot want it. It all the time presents itself in the form of either anger, lust or greed in many ramifications, endless ramifications. It would be impossible to be sane; it would be impossible to evolve if man, alongside with his material tendencies, would not have a rational mind and a higher vital. That is the difference between him and the brute.

In order to conquer the lower pull of the desire body, you have to develop great intelligence, willpower and love, these are the dire enemies of the unintelligent lower forces. There should be the observer, and it goes without saying that the observer has to be above the observed.

When one is more or less established in his love of Truth, of everything which is transparent, clean, harmonious and lovely, one then is in quite a different position. He is attacked by lust, greed and anger because they are universal forces; they are chaotic, unregenerated forces in nature, but he watches them. He observes them as the barking of the dog. He is not afraid of them and he is not influenced by them. So to achieve that state of consciousness one has to really work.

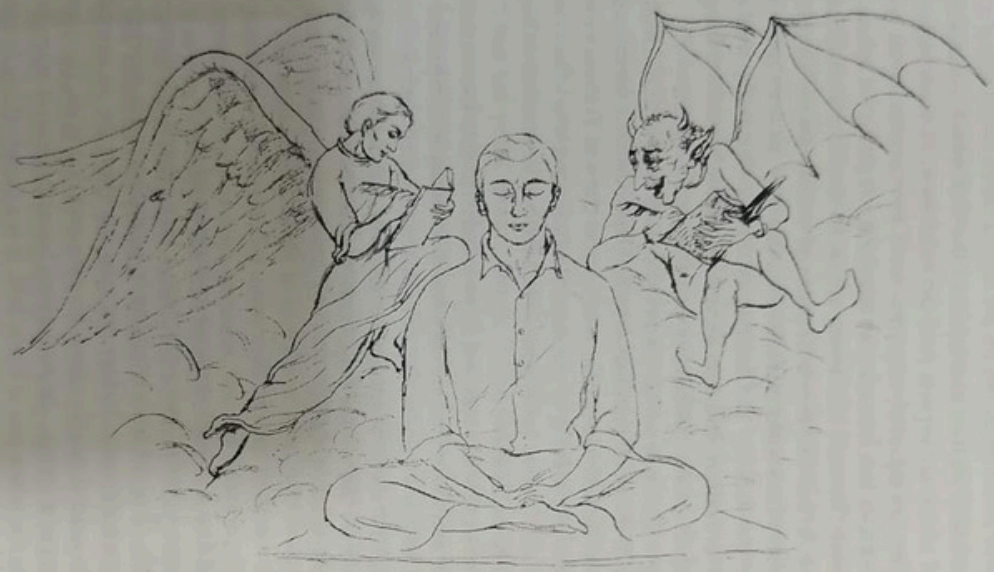
Student: Guru, what can we do in order to help build the right vital life?

Valentina: Whenever you do something without thinking about yourself and do it because it captivates you, the best of you, because it is inspiring you, then you are very, very wonderfully developing your vital body. When you are doing things because it is a must, you are not developing anything. But when you are doing it because you love, you are developing it. And this helps you to control the grey, the black and the dark brown smelly stuff of the lower vital. You become pastel; you then have the very beautiful hues in your vital body. Understand?

Student: Yes, Guru., I do.

Valentina: Therefore, in our physical consciousness, in the physical body, we ought to be very, very busy all the time building up the fine, wonderful vital body within ourselves which should be healthy, strong, luminous, glorious "corps glorieux" is the dream of the occult! That is to say, to densify the great and fine and pure vital body to such an extent that there will be no ugly death, that there will be no disease, but the sojourn on earth will be a fine sport! This is the dream yet. But the fact and not the dream is that within you is that vital stuff which is either ugly or beautiful or in between, colourless.

Student: Would it be too forward on my part to ask You to describe the higher vital regions?



Man finds himself constantly between the two Forces: the Deva sits at his right shoulder and benevolently records every good thought, word and deed; the Asura sits at his left shoulder and alas triumphantly records every bad, sinful and corrupt movement within him. The future Karma of man depends on the predominance of either one of the filled-up sheets.

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Valentina: You know too well that I am reluctant to speak about the things which are speculation, which are inviting the occult, which are vague and mystic. You have to experience them rather than imagine them. But go ahead.

Student: Well, just was hoping Guru might tell us something about the life in the higher vital.

Valentina: There are many regions and layers of the vital which are not at all base or horrible but which are superb. And the light there, in those higher vital spheres, is luminous, transparent, exquisite. Now, for instance, when we worship with lights, scents, colours, beauty, we invoke the higher vital sphere. Even the gods sport there! There are also weeny spirits there who are attracted only to beauty but who do not like the restlessness of human mind; they do not like those desire emanations which scorch them. But they are very fond of roses and music...they are dancing and bathing in this. So this is the pretty aspect of the vital sphere, entirely different from what I have been describing previously. The vital aspect of this is vitalizing you and purifying you.

That surging feeling within you which longs for beauty is part of the high vital; it goes together with the intelligent will. It is the friend and can be turned to the very lofty purpose. But the lower vital goes against the will. It lives in the body and in the mind and in the being of the man, yet knows nothing about the man! And the man very often knows nothing about it. Man becomes aware of his lower being only when he raises above it.

...The wiser man knows that he does not know much. He also knows that he has to control, refine and shape his various parts if he wants to live harmoniously. In the course of his struggles, he develops the central being who attracts the higher forces. Parallelly he recognizes joyously that "on his own he can do nothing." He calls for the Divine help. From then on he is aware of the higher forces and he surrenders to them.

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Student: Guru., what does it take for someone to understand death?

Valentina: To understand death you put it into a very general question it depends on who one is. One can understand only according to his development, according to his evolution, etc. It does not take any effort for an animal to understand death. An animal quietly closes his eyes and that is all. He does not think; he does not argue about it...he sometimes laments about it when he sees it. Nobody wants to die when one is born. Still, it is a simple thing for an animal. It is a thing which is accepted in the animal kingdom and in the plant kingdom. It is difficult to accept it in man's kingdom.

Try to put yourself into total isolation. You will understand yourself much better and you will understand death also. You see, we are to such an extent conditioned by personality, by society, by profession, by various associations, that they console in a way. Even if we make wars, even if we have criminal sit is all a show, a distraction. We do not think about death, even if we ourselves kill and are killed. We do not have sufficient time to ponder and, precisely, what you said, to understand.

Stay in your room. Do not go anywhere. Do not write. Do not answer telephone, etc., but not misanthropically and not being doped or sick, but just deliberately, like a philosopher would do! You will understand. You will understand! You discard many, many "make believes" in your life you will start analyzing yourself. You will see many things about yourself. You will see your body the way it is; you will see your mind the way it you will see that you are alone and that all the communications with people are entirely artificial.

When you understand life, you understand death. Both are really the same. It is just the same coin with two reverse sides. If you are born, you are to go. To understand death is to understand the perpetuum mobile of come and go, go and come. The body came alone helpless and pitiful and a little disgusting a newly born baby is not too sightly till it grows and covers up evenly with the fat skin. You will realize, even if you do not remember, how you came. All right. Then ten years, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, hundred!...whatever! What is this? Just accumulation of various impressions. So when you are alone, you understand that aside from this, from this little body which covers up something, this little body which was not here some time ago, there is something which this body is covering. Where will this something go? And so you start understanding what

you are taking with you and who you are...when you are alone. You cannot understand it when you are with people.

To understand death is to enlarge your knowledge about yourself. When you know that every day some cells in your body are dying, you begin to look upon your body as your garment. You are renewing it; it is your duty to wear it as long as possible. Because once you are born, you have to make the best out of the mess [Smiling)...and learn as many things as possible. Further, when one discards that grossest sheath, it is said that one finds oneself in a subtler sheath. So you did not die at all. And if you fulfilled your life here on earth, you are then less greedy for life. You have learned many things during this incarnation. Therefore, it is good to live long rightly. If not rightly, it is just a wastage of time God's time.

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...It is interesting to give an account to yourself how you approach the practices we are practicing, how you approach the studies, how you approach the life in the Ashram, how you approach meditation, for that matter, or your attempt to meditate. The interesting part of this is that very few people consciously think about their evolution. If you do those practices with the idea of evolving, with the idea of special self betterment, then everything is valid in your life and then you are consciously progressing. It is not a spectacular success which matters and which usually the restless, impure mind wants, but it is a genuine transcendence of your nature.

Now here again, I mentioned two words: the word "evolution" and the word "self betterment." Conscious self betterment leads to evolution. But mark well and discriminate! The restless, impure mind of the selfish man wants self betterment in order to be successful in life, in order to be number one in order, in order, in order! Well, it is better to have that kind of ambition than to be inert, passive and totally, totally unavailable for any kind of betterment. However, man now, especially man who chooses the life of evolution or the life of self perfectionment, spiritually, has to stop and think and understand that the ordinary self betterment, when it is very selfish and ambitious and competitive, is out, that you are not to have it in the higher life.

Student: Is there no place in human evolution for the competitive drive?

Valentina: There was such place! when man's choice of self betterment was synonymous to being more competitive or else he would stagnate in Tamasic state indefinitely; there would be no evolution whatsoever. These are the tendencies from the remote past when "dog ate dog" and when it was necessary. Man brought it into this stage of his mental, physical and spiritual development when such attitude is not only not necessary, but is an impediment. He already ate many dogs and was eaten by many dogs so stop! Don't do it anymore! This period of evolution of man is based on sacrifice rather than on "go and get" attitude.

... You will come to the Supreme if you will choose your evolution, if you will choose to do the things for the sake of Perfection, if you will choose to do the things because they lead you towards God and not because they lead you towards some kind of a gain, towards some kind of a profit which usually is the Rajasic or the restless and the selfish motive. You have to be Sattwic and you have to love Perfection for the sake of Perfection and not because it will give you some kind of a tip.

Student: Guru, is it possible through our awn self betterment and evolution to improve the lot of humanity?

Valentina: Verily, nobody can help man but God. And only that man who opens to God becomes the voice and the hand of God. So that is what you have to have in mind all the time. If you open yourself, you become the instrument and then God helps another man through you.

How do you benefit the other man? Mostly by your emanation, not by your preaching, but by that which is behind the words of niceties. It is that Divine Energy which works, not through everybody, but only through those who consciously choose to belong to the Path and to open themselves. Unless you realize that you have no spiritual right to emanate either boredom, or despondency, or ill wishing to another man, you are the instrument of the opposite to God. Yours then is the left hand preaching, the left side.

With all that, give your heart to the Supreme so that you can become the instrument, so that you can emanate cheerfulness and gladness and gratitude and hope and beauty. And that comes only if you forget your nasty wilfulness. You have to open yourself, give yourself, quietly and gladly. God bless you.

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This is January and I did not finally "baptize" it, although at the beginning I did stress the word "renewal." Now that I am looking back the way it started and the way I was projecting all the time, it seems that the best word for it would be "ardour." Ardour has its assistant, his name is Aspiration. Ardour and Aspiration, a tremendous team!

Om Sakti, Sakti, Sakti.

FEBRUARY

It is the first of February a new month, a new possibility, a renewed gratitude for the past month a very intense January! Potent, unusual past month unusual because of its manifoldness! So bow to January start February!

Iwill baptize February right away and it will be called "Intelligence." Intelligence incl includes so many nuances, and everyone can test his intelligence. It includes discrimination; it includes alertness; it includes attention. Sometimes it includes intellectuality and sometimes it excludes it; that's intelligence. When you feel it necessary, you can be erudite and highbrow, you use the intellect. When you feel it is out of place and you better become simple (not to mistake with Simple Simonishness), you discard the book lore and you become simple and humble and ever ready to learn. This is the sign of superior intelligence.

Man of great erudition at times is most unintelligent in that he is haughty and arrogant. He says that "this is it and nothing more!" Man of "high morality" sometimes is very unintelligent because he also says, "That's it and nothing more." And is he of high morality?! He is of morality which is made by the same limited minds as his. But man of spirituality is intelligent; thus, he never limits anything or anybody. He expands, he includes, he observes, he humbles himself. He never wants another man to be unto him. He never says, "Just be like I said!" For that is what the moral people do say most of them. "My morality, my religion, my, my, my, my." And what is in this "my, my, my" but selfishness and unintelligence and rigidity and haughtiness and endless limitations?! Real intelligence improves both on morality and on borrowed erudition. Student: Real intelligence?.... Does it follow then that most of us perform our duties rather unintelligently? For it seems we do our work rather selfishly.

Valentina: Yes, you all expect tips. Don't become lackeys.

Student: But then we will become communists! [Laughter]

Valentina: You probably will! It, by the way, is easy to become a communist without meaning general welfare but catering to fanatic assertiveness of preconceived political idea!

But let's go back to the original thought. The point I stress is intelligence which includes character and many other qualities. Somehow all the intelligent qualities and virtues are connected with one golden string! It is not as abstruse as it may sound to you. It is just a tiny switch, a little change inside and you start acting differently.

Student: What would You say is "real intelligent" action?

Valentina: I have stressed many times, and I repeat to you, that the intelligent man (or for that matter the superior man of Confucius) does not attribute to himself any particular virtue only because he performs his duty! But rather, he acts as he does because it ought to be done, just ought to be done! not because he considers his acts lofty or virtuous or moral but simply because It has to be done. The "ought to be done" indeed requires intelligence. If something is inducing benefit based on purity or harmony, it ought to be done. If it does not Increase harmony, It ought not to be done. Then to abstain from action would be intelligent! If you take upon yourself various chores or undertakings which you are not at all expected by High Intelligence to do, you are stupid. To do something which promotes harmony somewhere, not to expect any reward for it, is intelligent. It has to be spontaneous, harmonious, selfless, then it is "Intelligent action."

Student: Does the ability to reason make one more intelligent?

Valentina: Deep inner Intelligence does not "dig," does not reason, but silently submits to the higher Voice within. Such intelligence plunges into intuition; without Intuition there hardly can be any real Intelligence. There is an element of intuition already in a man who is intelligent in the highest sense of the word.... Erudition without intelligence is far removed from intuition and insight. It is just the dry information, the cargo on the back of the donkey [Smiling].

Student: Guru, if intelligence rests on intuition, what of thought which is so prized in civilization?

Valentina: Anything which is mechanical, intrusive, unconscious, irresponsible is unworthy of the word "thought." I hope everybody would agree with that and I hope it is clear enough to everybody. Nevertheless, the usual state of human (again, not the word

"consciousness," for it is too big a word and few people have consciousness), but a usual state of human mind is precisely too many such irresponsible thoughts. Therefore, on the way towards spiritual consciousness, man has to arrest his constant intrusive thoughts, his constant restlessness, perpetual changing from one mental topic to another and again, not even topic, but simply sensations and random half thoughts.

Student: Then, Guru, is there no positive value in thinking?

Valentina: An old philosopher said (everyone probably remembers this): "Cogito ergo sum" which is the Latin saying: "I think, therefore I exist." We have to start with thinking. Few men, very few men achieved the clearcut thought, the power of thought, the ability to reason clearly and profoundly very few. People think at random, people are nervous, the thought is usually topsy-turvy. But there are people, In minority, who already have developed their mental body, as it were, who can reason deeply even as, I am sure, this philosopher did. The old man was right! Thought is the stepping stone to wisdom! I reason, therefore I exist. The next philosophical statement probably would be: I know, therefore I exist.

If we are spiritually advancing, we simultaneously know that thought is not everything. We know, that is the point. When we arrive at this state of "f know" or "I am," we can be with thought or without thought. This knowing is definitely a step farther up and an improvement on just reasoning.... The "know" is the wisdom of life, the true existence. When we know, we can control the existence itself. And let this be the deep thought for today: how to exist through Knowledge. This is not only cogito ergo sum here on this earth but It is to be always! Here and hereafter, with the body and without the body, with thoughts and without thoughts, forever, to know. But on the way towards such Knowledge we have to develop so many parts within ourselves: the body, the mind and the soul force....

Student: How to tell the Knowledge of such Heights?

Valentina: Knowledge which comes through the expanded consciousness is based on Wisdom. The "knowledge" which comes from empiricism is a mere erudition or a temporal experience. A sage, a true sage, knows; a pundit...not necessarily!

Student: You said that on the way towards Know ledge we have to develop the mind. How do I begin?

Valentina: At the beginning you are doing humbly the great chores of stopping your restless mind from calculations which are unnecessary at times and which are only developing and asserting your lower nature, your Johnson, your ego. You first make your human effort of observing your mind and rejecting all the time that which is not, definitely not, acceptable to the Divine, to the Perfection, to the Purity, to the Greatness which is God. And then comes the moment when you are able to establish your thoughtlessness, when you are able to be thoughtless for a long time and yet not passive, not inert, not empty in the sense of Impotence, but empty in the sense of "no Johnson anymore." Then starts the conquest of mind which is very different from your human efforts.

You are Increasing the silence of your whole being, including that mind which you are silencing by catching it; you are not accepting it; you are arresting it and delivering it to the Judge! You literally hear the voice within yourself which says, "Stop and be silent and let Me take over." Well, it is a very interesting process.

Student: Guru, isn't such control best done in silent moments?

Valentina: Well, those silent moments are not only in the meditations and contemplations upon the High, but also In the midst of activities and ordinary life. You have to watch and pray and observe yourself wherever you find yourself. You have to develop the ability to observe and yet not become rigid about It. Observe in the sense that you are separating your will (your higher faculty) from your impulse (your lower faculty). The impulse goes into either panic or rejoicing of the very immature style let’s put it very politely!

So when you are having all this precise picture about the kicking’s of your lower mind, you are taking the reins in your hands; you are driving your horses instead of them pulling you! You are able to reduce the restless gallop of your "horses" through increase of silence. Silence when you are in action is actually the ignoring of the promptings. It is doing the thing well which is at hand and not paying attention to that which the lower ego wants either the approval, or the competition, or the sexual escapades, or the vanity, or all these together! At times it is just plain fear, worry, depression mostly negative influence of other minds.

Watch the kicking’s and ignore them as the barking of the dog. But simultaneously you are to increase the more poetic and spiritual practice of surrendering yourself to the Divine. So on one side it is the effort to silence your mortal mind and on the other side it Is surrendering to the Divine Will which will help you to silence yourself by filling you with Its Power, with Its Sakti.

[Quietly] Om Sakti. For verily this is the Sakti's job: to develop our thought first; to give us Knowledge second and to bless us with Power through Knowledge third. God bless you.

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[In Beginning in the month of February, Holy Mother introduced the new Sadhana of "Silent Sunday"]

Tomorrow will be a day of silence for everybody. It will be a completely silent day for me. When I do not talk to you, I do much more than when I talk to you. Because when I talk to you I adjust myself to your mentality, whereas when "I think to you" or transmit to you, I do not have to adjust, but the Force, the Sakti, can work through me freely.

Student: Guru, I must admit that I will miss very much the morning Satsangs on Sunday. They were such an enormous source of inspiration. I would love to have more! And although I do appreciate Your new Sadhana of Silence I really would rather have Your talk more!

Valentina: Well, you are like Arjuna who said to Lord Krishna: "I can't hear enough; I am never satisfied; I want to hear more, more, more!" Unlike this fiery aspiration of Arjuna, the average student often is overburdened by the intensity of spiritual Satsang. But be of good cheer! Silence will play a very beneficial role, for in the moment of deep silence one can ponder upon that which one finds most inspiring.

Your silence is for the purpose to raise your crescendo of alertness, rhythm, perception and sharp agility of mind.

Second student: As to myself, I am looking forward to the silence.

Valentina: You are right silence will serve you nicely! It will lead you into more productivity in all areas.

First student: What then is the connection between Silence and acute communication like between Guru and us in Satsang? Certainly we are not in silence now and yet it is the sharpening of our faculties. To me it is just as good as silence as it was to Arjuna, as You just explained.

Valentina: [Laughs/ There is a point to it. You will have a clearer impact if you will think about it as music. In'order that there could be a diminuendo, there should be a crescendo, right? Without crescendo how can you diminish?! So without Satsang, without intensest practices, without heightening of your daily routine and your daily awareness and consciousness, you simply are not fit to practice silence. You simply will misunderstand it. Silence is manifold; there are so many aspects and assets of silence that everyone will derive out of conscious silence precisely that for which he is ready. If you, for instance, are unable to partake of Satsang fully (and most of you are unable), it means you are not fit for either silence or conversation. It means you have to increase your attention, alertness, restrictions and, in general, your intelligent life on the higher level during the whole week. Then your Sunday Silence will be fruitful and your Monday Satsang inspiring!

Student: Guru, how can we prepare ourselves for this particular Sadhana of complete silence?

Valentina: The new Sadhana of "Silent Sunday" if approached unintelligently becomes neither a Sadhana nor silence but becomes just stupor and inertia. Therefore, contemplate the idea of silence before starting the austere Sadhana: why are you silent?! One of the purposes is to increase within yourself the vibration of love. You attempt to consciously reject the vibration of hatred. That was the original purpose of this Sadhana. Iwanted to help some of you to love more!

There are waves of love and waves of hatred. Through silence, fast, dedication, you start the control of mind with its predominant two waves. Hatred breeds more hatred; love generates and attracts more love!

Love has many ramifications; so does hatred! Love starts in well-wishing and tolerance. Hatred in criticism and condemnation. Love develops through empathy, self-abnegation, patience, service and immense humility.

Hatred grows through self-assertiveness, greed, self-pity, self-aggrandizement, passions and demands. Hatred, when it goes into its climax, becomes a diabolical grimace, a force of destruction and corruption for the sake of spite and disgrace.

Love is broad and wide, light spreading. Hatred narrow, choked in its own smoke....

Student: Are there ways to protect ourselves from the hate waves of others?

Valentina: When we associate with people we all the time bathe, as it were, our auras in theirs. Everyone, every human being, projects his aura; some auras are good, others are bad, still others are medium. We are not in the position to control the waves very well till we learn to be alone and silent within, even when we are surrounded by people.

When man is "on the Path," he is asked not to mingle with the crowds, to avoid the big gatherings, the stuffy rooms and many such environments because he is in danger of polluting his aura (that is, when it is sufficiently purified but not yet strong enough to maintain the purity).

Student: How to increase the love wave?

Valentina: Love should not be forced, You should not be artificial and hypocritical! Feel love as a force! Project love to that which you love and admire most (at first this way). And gradually it becomes more and more, it embraces one and all! You begin to experience very sweet feelings of peace, contentment and adoration. Expand! Understand consciously, intelligently, that the Eternal is manifesting Himself in awful Silence. If you learn calmness you can perceive the Invisible Silent Witness. Thus, your outer silence is only an aid to inner intenseness, ardour and purity!

Student: Then, Guru, silence is the foundation upon which to build the inner life is that its practical purpose?

Valentina:. The main object of practice of silence is to be able to commune with God! This becomes possible only when first you get acquainted with your physical, mental and emotional faculties. Don't please think that such Sadhana is programmic: part one, rejection; part two, purification; part three, control, and so forth. No. There is only one part and this is love.

Silence, when based on love, really becomes a divine force which dispels evil and heals all ills.

Student: When one meditates, does it increase love?

Valentina: Well, meditation is love! Only those people who love can meditate. Humans have very peculiar notion about love, very strange notion something sentimental, something weak, something lollipoppish, or else something aggressive, demanding, asserting. How far, far removed this is from Love! Love is positively the Divine Force and it is a very intelligent Force, very conscious Force.

When man says he is in love or man says he loves, sometimes he is in love and sometimes he does love, but really and truly, we should clarify that phrase, that statement! It is not that he loves but It loves through him! Man as man cannot love; it is the Divine which makes him love; it is that Force which knocks in every consciousness trying to find the right receptacle, and alas, it mostly goes away, for the receptacle is closed; it is not the right one! That is why only the elite can love. And do you know what? Sometimes humanity does not recognize true Love! Because the true lovers do not meet human average requirements. The requirements of the human, ordinary concepts of love are something maudlin and silly, or something, I say, very forceful, aggressive, assertive, compelling and demanding! And so, when one who is really full of love does not answer such requirements, such expectations, he is pronounced as unloving, "cold," withdrawn and whatnot!

Well, when you do not feel that egoity within yourself, that sick desire to expect, demand and superimpose, you can love. And I repeat again, meditation is love: It is to invoke that Force of Love. That Force of Love, that Divine Sakti, is the true manifestation of God. Now, we cannot make God small; God is everything. It, God, He, has Wisdom, has Power, has Love (those are the main attributes), and man cannot embrace all that is there. It is infinite, mysterious and secret. But through the full incarnations of God, man can have an idea of what God is, what an enormous Love that Eternal Being is!

Now, when human being quietens, stills his noises and opens up himself to the Divine, he is filled up with Love. When Love to such an extent fills him up that he forgets his being, then he is in love with the Divine and is Divine himself! But when he demands or sentimentalizes, well then we will put many dots, dots, dots, and I do not say anything else! [Short pause)

Do you know that flowers can love also?! The trees can love; the animals too can love! He who loves knows that love in nature. It is really awesome how the trees at the sunrise stretch themselves towards the sun. So does the flower, so does the grass.

There is the pull to love in every living being, creature, in everything which breathes. You know that sometimes a flower blossoms out of season to please the man whom he loves! There is definitely attraction to some people in some plants. What does make this attraction? The Divine Energy of man, the psychic energy in him, attracts the weeny bit of consciousness of the flower. It is very, very fantastic, very beautiful.

There is love even in minerals. There is love in precious stones, very much! Some of them sparkle very nicely also, to please the loving eye, but this language is removed from man. And sometimes man pollutes the precious stones, making them unlucky, because he does not have love and the stones reflect it.

Well, when man turns his human being to the Divine Being, there is union; there is the return to his origin not that one is really separated, but it is the human limited mind which separates itself from the Divine. The flower does not separate itself, but man does. Is this not tragic?!

Now let's unite with the Divine by consciously opening ourselves to It. It is a very, very beautiful process of meditation when one does not try hard, does not pretend, does not precisely bring all his phony nature into such sacredness as opening yourself to Love.

There is nothing really mysterious about it if one can love, if one's heart is very pure. If there are quite a few "if's," but if all those "if's" are eliminated, then it clicks. And when it clicks, you get Illumination and then you walk as if you have wings in your shoes!



Saint Valentine's Day

February14, 1975

[Student's response to Satsang dedicated to Saint Valentine)

Guru There were so many nuances tonight. Now, afterwards, I just feel like letting them soak in and feed me.

It was so beautiful how You played and joked in the beginning using all the colours and spark and outer beauty in their fullest manifestation and yet not losing one bit the contact with the Highest. When Guru walked through the door, holding in Her arms a little red velvet cushion in the shape of a heart and in a charmingly exaggerated voice said, "Valentine, Valentine, who will be my Valentine?" and then paused, looked around and placed the little object at the Altar of Saint Valentine it was just fantastic and fascinating!

And then when You spoke when You very quickly became serious it was as if everything of the outer became very strange to You. There was such depth in You. When You spoke of Liszt and the Real Love there was so much behind You, so much Force and Realness and Experience behind what You said. I kept thinking over and over again of what You told us once, that when You smell a rose, You just send the fragrance to the Above. And I thought of all Guru was sending out tonight, the at times musing.... it all seemed like an incredible, real fragrance just going up for the gods.

Whatever little heart I may have, I pray to give it to Guru the Great Heart. I love You.

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[Satsang dedicated to Saint Valentine)

[After gazing with the wonder and delight of a child at the colourful Altar dedicated to Saint Valentine, which was surrounded with traditional Saint Valentine cards of red hearts

given to Holy Mother in great numbers from many students, devotees and well-wishers, Valentina points to the red ensemble Now, jokes aside, that is what man makes out of lovered colour and "Liebestraum" [One of the more popular romantic piano pieces of Franz Liszt which greeted Valentina when She entered] and the hearts out of paper. I tell this to you every year that is what man associates with love! And I am amused as you just witnessed. [Referring to Her little show see student's letter.... Valentina's face aglow, Her eyes sparkling, She whispers) But, I prefer the golden heart. The golden heart does not show itself in visibility it is inside. And it has everything. It has big love of which it does not talk. And that is real Valentine Valentine who Loves very much. And that is it. And because Iam Valentina, I love the love of Saint Valentine. God bless Saint Valentine and his emanations amongst all of us.

And we will be, for a while, a little bit silent. Instead of "Liebestraum" give us something as beautiful but not quite so popular. [The music of Franz Liszt's "Benediction de Dieu dans la Solitude" is played. Valentina becomes absorbed in the sound. Then smiling, turns to the student who selected the piece) The same Liszt with a little different tonality but still on the romantic side. Jay, you're progressing! [Silence] This selection of Liszt is exquisite. His "Benediction de Dieu dans La Solitude" is a veritable boon to the gods! "Dans La solitude" means in silence, in solitude. So the transcending part of the romantic feeling is not togetherness but solitude where you can best express your soul and receive he blessings of God. [Silence]

Now that you saw my red [Valentina wore this night a red dress, a veritable fairyland dress which makes you see Hansel and Gretel), put off these glaring lights so that you won't stare at me!

And I am going to tell you something. I am going to tell you an interesting thing which occurred to me this very moment because of that stirring music of Liszt, which you can associate with a novel if you prefer (and which most people do, even this very exquisite music) or you can associate it with love without novel. Usually love, the way people understand it, is either novelistic or philanthropic or, for that matter, matrimonially justified and dull, dull, dull, brrr.... Seldom it is spiritual. Even this word "spiritual" I use reluctantly, because, alas, it is so adulterated. We literally have no words to describe certain heights. How often one uses the word "spiritual" instead of the word "religious" or "ritualistic" or whatever....

Usually, at the background of love, if you open even the best novel, it is a man and a woman. Very seldom it is some other topic. If it is a novel, it has to be love between the two polarities man and woman.

But I am excluding the novelistic lore; I think about the love which transcends that, which is entirely sexless and yet which has all the ardour and all the flame and all the most exquisite colours of the most exquisite rainbow. But it does not have that element of novelistic stuff. It is difficult to understand for people who did not experience it, people think it is almost impossible. And I will tell you just think about such novelistic nonsense; it can last only a couple of decades at most. Nay, why decades! A couple of hours!.... [laughter] In its real intensity. Well, in "superior" cases, let's say a couple of decades, and then what? And then there is nothing left of the flame. It is gone. So what kind of a love is it? In the best cases it becomes (ironically) a "friendship""companionship." Away with companionship I want love! [Lowering Her voice and smiling mischievously) says Saint Valentine! And love which he had and which is forever, regardless whether your cheeks are rosy or wrinkled, that kind of love is without novels. It transcends novels. It is the most exquisite communication of thought, of feeling, of aspiration, of self-giving, of understanding, of reverence, of adoration...of all-inclusiveness. It is ageless, it is beginningless, and it is endless. This is love! And novelistic is...stuff...novelistic stuff. All right. Can we transcend the novelistic...call it "element" if you prefer to be more serious about it! Yes, we can. Definitely we can. However one thing remember well: love is love and sex is sex. [Slowly, hesitatingly) Can it be combined?...I don't know and really won't say "I hope it can be...." To tell you candidly, (Valentina laughs) I hope not! So that is it.

...And now back to Saint Valentine. He certainly knew the love which needs not any props, which is aflame, alive, alert. See how many "a's"[Childlike, whispering) aflame, alive, alert. Forever and always! [Silence]

Student: Sounds like a poem...a beautiful poem...but who could offer such love?

Valentina: He who has a very rich heart, not from "papier mache" but from the rainbow of the divine colours of golden pastel tones, [Whispering) it is mostly gold. And it is when there are feelings so transcended and so purified and so full of special life, vitality, exquisiteness that such love comes. It is very beautiful love.

BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

February18, 1975

Sri Ramakrishna was of Light, of the brightest Light, of the absolute Light, so it was of small wonder that He was all the time responding only to the highest sendings. To Him the coexistence with the Divine was just as normal as for the ordinary person it is abnormal, or perhaps miraculous or something which needs explanation or psychic research. It is also small wonder that by ordinary people with ordinary gross mentality, He often was pronounced a madman.

As a matter of fact, unless a highly spiritual person conceals his spirituality, he often is considered by others as something out of sorts. By concealing, I do not mean any kind of hypocrisy, of course. A spiritual person cannot be hypocritical, but I mean the Vedantic smile. I mean that highest aspect of spirituality which is sagely.

Sri Ramakrishna was a sage; He also was a very ecstatic Bhakta; He could not care less for anything or anybody but His Divine Mother. Therefore, He acted very often like a small child. It is a known fact that an incarnation acts at times as a madman, at times as a baby, at times as the greatest sage, and at times is incognito. He is not known to people the way He really is. He can be everything with anybody; He assumes thousands of personalities.

Ramakrishna always, in His babyhood, in His youth, and in His mature age, was a combination of a human with the Divine. For instance, at times He would be entirely unassuming, sometimes very, very far away from all His great mystical revelations. He would mimeno one could surpass Him in acting:

He would be pranky and cheerful as a naughty charming child; He would do many other sweet things! He never was an ordinary man, but He was accessible to people and would act as almost a very simpleminded person in their eyes and would speak about the things of everydayness. He always was very modest, very humble, but He would never consider himself an ordinary person. It is not contradicting the humility. A great man always knows that he is great, yet he might be very human and could attribute to himself all human frailties not in the sense of vices that He never had and that He never would attribute to Himself, but in the sense of helplessness due to the limiting adjuncts, body and mind, or

in the sense of a puzzlement, in the sense of indecision and all these human characteristics,

Because He was as pure as...no. not a child!...neither a "diamond" nor "crystal," but as pure as Ramakrishna, He never would conceal His unusual consciousness. He would expose His bewilderment.

[Valentina is transfigured into Ramakrishna, totally absorbed and using the sweet innocent tone and even voice which immediately makes one feel that Ramakrishna is talking!) "Why is it that I don't understand it? Why is it that this thing scared me?" Just like a divine child. Then suddenly He would tell everybody that He is Rama or Krishna. He would be in the complete proximity with the Divine. He would feel only the Divine, and He would speak like a great prophet. He would astonish people of knowledge and education by His wisdom, by the quotation of the scriptures which He did not learn and did not read, by the explanation of these scriptures, by the commentaries which were absolutely beyond the imagination of the greatest pundits.

Why is that? It is because of this: the human body and the human mind are the limiting adjuncts. Even if the Lord Himself is incarnated in the human body, which has the certain characteristics for this particular stage of its evolution, the God takes upon Himself all these limitations. When functioning just in His outer consciousness, He is subject to His outer personality. The moment He is in inspirational mood or in ecstatic concentration, He transcends His bodily limitations the body is there but He is "out of it." He is functioning in the region where His soul is. His soul is all-knowing and completely released from the bondage. Therefore, He amazes everybody by this deliverance of the Divine Truth without a trace of any human limitation.

Sri Ramakrishna lost all His health, because He literally took the sins of His disciples upon Himself. He was in Samadhi almost perpetually...and indeed there was too much of a difference between the vibration of the Godman and the man and sometimes the animal man who used to come to kiss the, literally, dust of His feet...so that when He was in Samadhi, a person with incurable disease or whatever would come to Him and leave his burdens upon this Godman. And the Godman would take them.

Being entirely spiritual, that is to say, enlightened, purified, heightened to the utmost, He definitely was disturbed by the unspiritual atmosphere definitely He was. One may ask,

"How come? A person who has reached such heights is supposed to be equally comfortable everywhere." So "He is supposed “but He is not [Valentina smiles). It is like this: a flower needs a certain environment; otherwise, it is all the time spotted and it is not anymore appearing as a flower. So, it is with the absolutely purified, rarified atmosphere around the evolved being. Not that He, out of compassion and enormous self-control cannot partake of everything and anything and be equal and have equanimity, but his tender substance is spotted just covered up by the substance that does not have anything to do with Him. And Ramakrishna very much felt that foreign to Him substance. That is the reason why He was so ardently fond of Vivekananda, because obviously Vivekananda's aura was the only one which did not clash with His at all. Everything which clashed with this essence of His, He would feel as most disturbing. He would not condemn the mundane people; He would not criticize them; He would not consider them an inferior stuff, but He simply would declare that they are so. And because He was not so, He wanted to share that which could help them to become unto Him.

When we think about Ramakrishna and about His unusual relationship with people, about His magnetic aura which was attracting everything beautiful and right and great, we definitely bring ourselvesinto this stratum. Things become pure and right. So we shall pray in the name of Ramakrishna who spoke about Himself as Rama and Krishna. The two Love Givers, Rama andKrishna, were talking through Him.

MARCH

Om Namah Sivaya! It is the first of March the month of Siva.

So how shall we call His month? Without the slightest hesitation I call this month: Humility. I associate the Lord with enormous humility, the most Divine quality. Some people think that it is enough to be modest and you are humble. No... humility is a Divine quality. It is the state of consciousness, heightened consciousness, in which whatever and however high you are, you still know that the Infinite Perfection is ahead of you and that bestows upon your humility....

It is difficult to be humble. It means that every part of you should never forget that without Siva you know nothing, you are nothing, you can do nothing! That without this Divine (now we are specifying God as Siva), you are mere ignoramus and you are absolutely chaotic and imperfect. Well, that means that you are humbling yourself not artificially, I told you itis a state of realization.

Ialways remember the story about the Lord, how He appeared to Sankaracharya in the guise of the untouchable, the most, not only humble, but the most humiliated creature. Why did He appear in such a guise? He wanted to teach the great savant, Sankaracharya, the great philosopher, Yogin and Saint, a lesson. You see, not only we, the imperfect beings, have to learn lessons daily and hourly, but even the greatest Sage is tested by ignorance. Very interesting.... The adverse forces are here for the purpose of revealing to man his sores. These opposers will automatically disappear when this world will be on the different rung. But for the time being, even Sankaracharya is tested, not by the Lord, but by the forces of hostility and ignorance! The Lord allows It for the sake of the purification of His best children.

Well, his sore was pride. He was shocked when the untouchable touched him. And then the pariah spoke:

[Valentina's voice a piercing thunderbolt] "Who is it that touched you and who is it that should not be touched? It is only the Lord in everybody and everywhere." And the pariah disappeared. Whereas Sankaracharya remained speechless and... enlightened. He overcame the last obstacle for his Divine Realization.

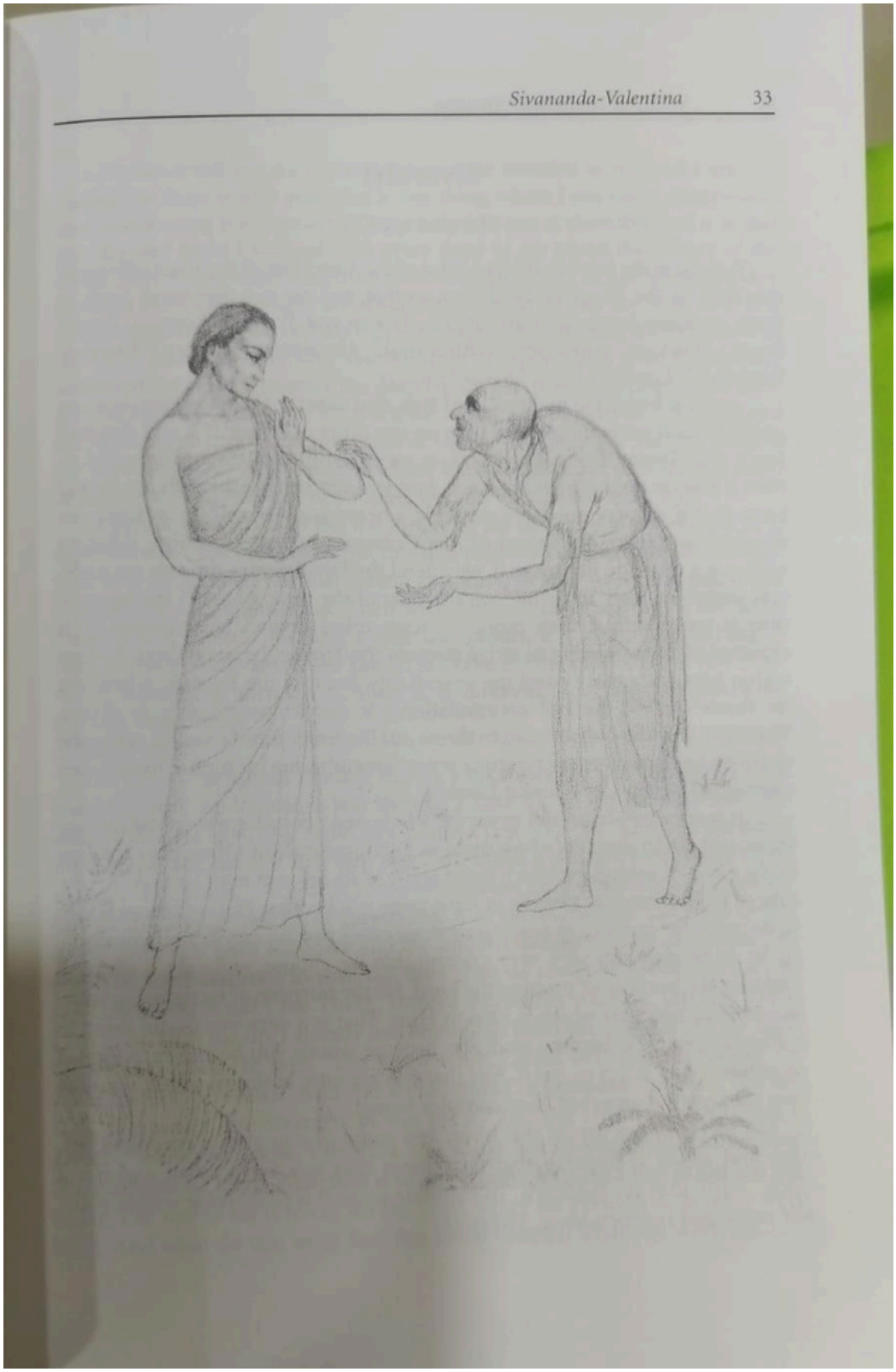
You have to humble yourself to the size of the blade of grass. You have to realize that you are absolutely persona non grata in comparison to the whole Cosmos. You are suffering with the sufferers and loving with the lovers and repenting with the sinners. You become one with the whole beat. Then only you can praise Lord Siva! Otherwise, it is amiss. It is nothing. You will say "Om Namah Sivaya" and you will forget it and you will be like a gramophone, like a parrot. That's nothing. But if you want to shake the whole world with the Mantra, you really can. You have to become that which I am telling you, part of every corner of the whole Cosmos through empathy, through taking upon yourself the sufferings, the joys, the ecstasies, the whole SHOW!

So, in the Name of God, we shall practice humility at the best of our capacity during this month of March which we started today. Humility certainly is the only way to get rid of ego. But it is a special quality. It is a Divine quality. Do not humanize it.

...Siva is absolutely humble. Nobody and nothing can exceed the Divine Humility. Can you imagine Siva admiring Himself, showing off?! I cannot. [Musingly] Neither could Sivananda, who was even as Siva.... The Lord ever finds a possibility to see Himself, His own Being, as not Himself. The whole Creation, the whole outside universe, is such an enormous "not Himself," and yet He is absolutely Perfect! He is the All! The month is called.... Humility.

Om Sakti of the Lord Siva....

God bless you.



Sivaratri

March 11, 1975

[Turning to the brightly shining lights of the Altar] Put all the blaze off except one light by the Image of Lord Siva, so that you are not distracted. Look at Siva's exquisite Image and absorb His Power and Peace.... Look.... Power, Peace, Wisdom, Austerity, Withdrawal, Absorption, Mercy, Absolute Knowledge, Limitless Love. That is Siva....

...On this night, the night of Lord Siva, that aspect of the Absolute, one can purify himself more thoroughly than on any other occasion. It is said that that Force, that Divine Force, Lord Siva, is very Compassionate and Merciful..... Now if you do not have faith, I have. And you can benefit through my faith. I know that if we pray now very sincerely, a heavy load we will throw from our shoulders, the accumulations of many offenses against Lord Siva. Whether we mean it or we do not mean it, we offend the Divine every time we are undivine ourselves. And "undivine" we are most of the time. At times the being of man is more animal than human never mind divine! Nevertheless, it is expected of human being to strive towards the Divine, because there is, deep within him, the capacity and the potentiality, because the essence, when you do throw out all the evil accumulations, is divine; potentiality is divine.

Therefore, it is the duty of man to throw out the lower nature and to subscribe to the higher nature. Every time one is not remembering his higher nature, one offends the Divine. Siva is your Essence!

...It is very wonderful not to eat the whole day, not to have even the drop of water, and not to sleep the whole night in the Name of God. Often man abstains in the name of something which is not godly at all. Seldom man abstains for the sake of God. If he does abstain, in most cases it is because Nature compels him to do so (as for instance in sickness or some other psychophysical discomfort). So let us be glad and very, very grateful that we choose, willingly, a sleepless night for the purpose of praising the Lord, for the purpose of recognizing within ourselves that part which is akin to Him. That is a very wonderful thing to meditate upon. You become glad; you become whole; you become strong. Let us ponder upon it. Let us feel it. Feel that you are now, at this moment, winning over the material aspect of your complex being!

The fact that you are, at this hour, and some of you after a complete fast, alive and awake (I hope!) that fact shows that you are a Spirit and not a body.... you may say the Spirit. To meditate upon it is to increase within yourself peace and independence. [Silence]

...I cannot tell you how many things were revealed to me and I am too "stingy" to share it with you; that is one thing where I am really stingy and that is in voicing my intimate experiences. But one is shareable and it is that this day and night I realized with every drop of my blood the misery of the world. Here we are abstaining from food through the act of will, while this very moment millions of people are abstaining because they do not have food. It is not to talk glibly about. Probably all newspapers are shouting about it; so, does the radio and television. But one thing is to report and gossip, and quite another thing is to experience the deep pain, the acutest suffering for the hungry and forlorn. Only when felt it is understood. Just one day of not eating and not drinking anything and one night of vigil is hard enough. But you imagine the starvation not abstinence! which leads to the death of body and mind of thousands and millions of people?! Do you understand what it is?

So, part of austerity is to feel the misery of the sufferers, to understand it, to experience it not on hearsay but through your own empty stomach, through your very heightened nervous system and through your heart full, full, full of compassion and intenseness. Then such observance is worthy. It has to be inner. If it is exterior fast and a little discomfort, it is absolutely nothing! It costs nothing, really and truly. You do not earn anything by it. But if you experience something through it, then it is different. You have to experience through everything.

[Next night]

The Lord who reveals Himself during your austerities and concentration is watching you. And because you showed a little bit of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation, He says, "All right, you made a first step but there are thousands more steps. You made a first step and I am making perhaps twenty-five steps, perhaps thousands.... towards you because the Lord is the Lord and you are just an ant, a puny wee bit of something. And He is Gracious and He is Great, so He gives you both the force and the understanding, and He steps down to you. The Lord descends to you! But then what do you have to do? You have to say, "Lord, where did I fail Thee?" Instead, you justify yourself. You say, "Lord, I am tired; I am fed up. I already had enough of this!" Well, that is not the right team then! Then He says, "You know what, Child? Perhaps you should try again the next Sivaratri!" And you are

delighted to postpone the Lord! You say, "Oh, that was a fine Sivaratri! It was great!" But the Lord says, "Why was it great?" "Well, you know, Valentina was some fun to watch! Just something! She's something else!" Well, that is what you say. Yes... And that is not the way to say. The way to say is to cry for the Lord, to cry for Perfection, to really weep for it! And what do you weep for? You know yourself what you weep for....So that is what I wanted to console you with not lollipops but with something very austere for those of you who really do not want toys but who want Truth! And the Truth is costly. You have to earn it. And He is listening. And He says, "Yes".... That's...all.

Om Namah Sivaya.... [Japa]

Passover

March 26, 1975

[Night Satsang outdoors]

Iwill tell you something which not every one of you might feel and know and which cannot be understood through the brain; it has to be realized through the higher faculty, through the divine insight. And this is that in Eternity there is no time and there is no space and there is no division and there are no separated religions. There is only One Supreme Power. Well, when man is sufficiently transcended, sublimated and refined, he, during his heightened moments of contemplation, has this vision of the oneness and timelessness. And then he can combine effortlessly and with great divine joy everything which leads to the Supreme One Power.

Student: I am not yet that high! Can Guru please help me to understand why there are so many different religions?

Valentina: Soar you will grasp it! There is absolutely no contradiction in religions when one perceives them inwardly, and there is much confusion when one perceives them outwardly, ritualistically, traditionally, nationally, racially, etc., etc.

I will give one fascinating instance which might help you to understand. It is about Goddess Saraswati and Her two devotees. One of the devotees was an ambitious "Rajasic king" and another was a contemplative "Sattwic king." Both were royalties and both had to fight for their kingdoms. The unambitious king had only one heart's aspiration to realize the Supreme, to fuse with Mother. The ambitious one wanted to kill his enemies and to be the mighty power of everything and everybody available the victor, the conqueror. And both of them adored Mother, but each one of them adored Her in his specific way, according to his rung of evolution. Now, for the Divine, there was no difference because the Divine sees from high above that both kings looked like two tiny figures, the same kind of figures, except that one was adoring Her with one kind of aspiration, another one with the other! Her business is to fulfil the heart's desire of both of them, because of the intenseness of their invocations. Even the asura can "get a boon!"

So, what happened? During the war She, the Goddess, allowed the spiritual one to be killed by the unspiritual one. And when She was approached by Her devotee and was asked, "How come You allowed the victory on that part?" the Goddess divinely smiled and said, "He is my Child; he makes Puja for Me every day and every day he is asking for victory. I gave him victory. This one is my Child, perhaps an older Child, a more mature one, and every day when he makes Puja he asks for liberation. So, I gave him liberation! I took away his physical body and now I gave him a chance to go into the much higher realm which will be the veritable boon for his consciousness!"

So, it is in our present religions everyone worships the Divine according to his capacity. Some are worshiping Passover; others are worshiping Christ. In fact, you are worshiping One God but are coming to Him through many ways, In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord says: "Through whatever path they approach Me, I meet them, My Children, on that particular path."

So, when you look to that enormous Cosmic Scale, you understand that all your divisions and subdivisions in your Lent or in your Passover are really and truly humanmade distinctions that your Lent and your Passover can be either attuned to the cosmic observances or completely separated from them. In other words, if you are inward, all your observances become significant, but if you are outward, they are nothing but your human little Seder, or little fast or no fast, or "Kulich and Paska"[5] [Smiling) very mundane and naive human celebrations.

... With all that, I am extremely happy that I find myself under the sky and the stars and that you are here! And later on, after you will be "reinforced," you will go to the Sanctuary. And some of you will bow to Moses and others to Christ and to the Cross. And the Lord from the Above will say, "Here are my butterflies, I wish they would become angels so that their wings will be really strong and then they will not fly around in so many funny directions. Let them soar."

He sees you.... and He sees you even in your own heart because that is where He dwells. But you are looking for Him "in many funny directions." He is here [Indicating Her heart]. And it is only here that you can realize Him. Above you can always admire and adore. But realize, you have to here [Again pointing to Her heart), because in His Mercy, He gave you a little fraction of Himself in order that you may find the way home. "The way home" is above everything, above good and bad, above angelic forces and demoniacal forces; it is the Absolute, the realization of Whom is our goal! Bold? Yes. Unattainable? No. You can attain it. When? Depends on your Sakti, on your psychic energy, and on your purity. You either attain it in millions of years or here and now, this moment by the Grace and through your own effort! Goddess Saraswati said that with physical consciousness man can never dream to come near the Wise and the Enlightened. Not because the Wise do not "want" him but because he sees himself as a dense, heavy log, and naturally the thick log is the unsuitable instrument for subtler life!

[5]

See "1974 with Sivānanda-Valentina," pages 69 through 72

Passion Week

March 23-29, 1975

We start, a new Sadhana, the Passion Week discipline, which is similar, very similar, to Sivaratri in its austerity and condensed concentration upon the, not sins, but upon the Absolute Purity of the Supreme in this case of Christ Jesus. His Absolute Purity definitely exposes the very impure nature of man, the essence of man's personality. So indirectly, man laments about his inadequacies of course not going into the unwholesomeness and self condemnation, but with the clarity of mind seeing himself visàvis the Absolute Purity.

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[Upon Holy Mother's request a student recites Holy Mother's translation into English of the much loved by Her Russian Prayer which She repeats during the Passion Week in Her mother tongue]

Student reads:

Lord, the Owner of my life, Remove from me the spirit of sloth, Depression, pride and idle talk, But endow me with the divine spirit of Chastity, humility, patience and love.

Aye, my Lord, my King! Give me the wisdom to see my own sins Rather than to judge the sins of my brethren. O Thou Who is eternally blessed, Amen.

Valentina: This prayer is the background of Passion Week, to reject the lower nature, to develop your higher nature, and for those who are practicing Sadhana for a long time, to pray for transcendence of both natures. It is a very wonderful, simple prayer of a great Russian saint and repeated during the Lent and lived by the true people. True people, please know, are those who practice every word they speak and who speak only that which they have experienced no glib talk, no big talk, no peace conferences. You have to establish the peace within yourself, in order that you have a moral right to talk about it. [Holy Mother chants the Russian prayer in Her native Russian tongue

[After silence] "O my Lord, the Owner of my life." Let's contemplate that "The Owner of my life." It means that regardless how much you can on your human, it is never enough on your human level and on your own..."the Owner of my life." And that is what all Christian Saints are stressing: that without the Grace of the Owner of your life you cannot do much.... Unless we are reaching out with all our sincerity and are able to receive that Grace, we are not secure, we cannot do much. Only the Grace can protect us and give us wisdom to transcend our gunas. And for that Grace we are praying ceaselessly.

Now what exactly does the saint mean by the Grace which alone can save him? It is precisely that ability to remember God all the time and that ability to have strength enough to say no to the lower nature. That is by the Grace only. When you have that strength to say no and to change yourself, that is the Grace, because human cannot do

it. If one gets this gift, then one surpasses all the prophets, according to Thomas à Kempis.

So that is what it is "the Owner of my Life." That is the first sentence of the prayer which I repeat during the Passion Week, all the time, by the way; not only this hour that I am with you, but all the time. It is the background of whatever I am doing. It is not at all difficult if you love it. And then it sings within you all the time regardless what you are doing. [Holy Mother chants the prayer in Russian]

...Let us go further into this prayer and see what particular vices the saint wants to be taken away from us, which particular vices are preventing us to draw nearer and to receive the Grace. "Prazdnost" means sloth, laziness, neglect...in the parlance of gunas, all the Tamasic troubles! Sloth can be many kinds whatever sloth, neglect and indifference to your Ideal you may be guilty of should removed. And for that, all saints are praying ceaselessly that they might not be overpowered by this ignorant current which arrests everything true within. It is not just laziness which is only too well known to everybody you do not want to do this and you do not want to do that that's not it. But it is psychological sloth, it is ritual sloth. Man can be very diligent physically and extremely slothful psychologically. Well, that what the saint is praying for that the sloth might be removed from his experience.

The next vice to be removed is gloominess, depression or despondency you can translate it into several words. It is a very expressive word in Russian. It is called "oonennie." It is a very unsaintly quality. It is not the spiritual sadness, at all. There is a superior sadness, when one, for instance, is suffering the pangs of pain of a lover who is separated from the beloved; it is not despondency! "A superior sadness" is when one loves God and feels far from Him, when one empathizes with humanity and takes upon himself the suffering of others, when one is contemplating the enormous sacrifice of Christ and is sad, "Sattwically" sad, if I may. That is not the depression and that is not the despondency. This is concentration upon the tragedy of the world to such an extent that it tears your heart to pieces. This is not the depression. At times it even goes together with specific joy, because on one hand one is suffering and on the other hand one knows about the Perfection which removes the suffering. So this is not the kind of despondency the saint is mentioning and this is not the kind of sadness. But it is lack of brightness and lack of joy and lack of sweet disposition which is unsaintly, and for that the saint is praying, that it might be removed from him.

And the next one is "lubonachalyie," literally "love of power"...again could be translated in many ways. It is arrogance, pride; it is the desire to domineer; it is an unhealthy self-assertiveness, craving to have powers over others. This has to be removed. And the fourth vice is called "prasdnoslovyie" which is very much an impediment; it means the idle talk. That has to be removed.

So now we analyzed briefly the four major vices which are very impure.

When we contemplate the impediments, these natural inclinations, we are dealing with our flesh, with the gross mentality, with the psychophysical inadequacies. Now we contemplate about the removal of them. We shall end our evening with the contemplation upon the bright part of this wonder prayer, about the virtues the saint loves best! And then perhaps...about that which transcends even the virtues.

Let us ponder upon the virtue which the saint offers us first. He puts, together with every saint, and every deep thinker, the utmost stress upon chastity. It is called "tzelomudryie." It is not only physical control of lust and sex but it is also mental chastity. It is a very subtle virtue. There are various unchaste habits which should be understood, controlled and replaced. To deeply love the poetry of Innocence is to effortlessly conquer the zigzags of unchaste forces....

The next one, the great one, is humility, "smirennomudryie." Then is patience, "ter'penyie, and culmination is love. As you see, in every prayer these great virtues take much importance. In every prayer, in every religious system, the spiritual virtues are the ones which are attracting the Grace. And it is only by the Grace, to begin with, that you have them. To adore them, to contemplate upon them, to ponder upon them is to develop the smile within yourself which helps to stand all the sad things, which inspires and which leads you also into the understanding of the essence of your being that which is above all the dualities. But this is already a very high achievement.

So we shall close our eyes and contemplate the virtues which I have just mentioned. All of them lead to Enlightenment.... Do not take them theoretically, I beg you! Be kindled with each one of these Goddesses of Truth! [Long silence]

... Well, that which transcends both the vices and the virtues is Christ, the Essence, the Immortal Spirit. And so the culmination of this night is the ado. ration of this Essence. First you crucify your vices, your animal nature; then you resurrect your angelic nature and then you transcend that Sattwic or angelic nature and merge into the essence of the Absolute, or Christ. Sattwa guna should lead to the state of the "Traigunyatitta.," the state above the three modes of Nature.

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[Next night]

"To see my own sins rather than to judge the sins of the others." Let this be a contemplation for tonight. A saint is simple, very simple and very humble and very great. Sin does not have the one corner, it has many corners and many ramifications. Therefore the saint mentions, "Let me see my sins. Even the saint may have "some corners!"

And there is another meaning, too. You must know that when the saint is praying in such humility, he is composing with great inspiration the prayer for the ordinary man. He empathetically goes into his very core and sees his needs.

So I want you to contemplate this particular part of the prayer. Now when I say "contemplate," I mean intelligent observation of that topic. Just today I spoke to some students and explained to them "not to judge" does not mean not to discriminate. It is very subtle area. Usually, man of physical consciousness and of outer piousness, or of desire to be pious, does not allow himself to judge another man, totally misconceiving the idea. In other words, instead of pronouncing, "I am impotent in judgement," he says, "Well, who am I to judge?" And this is really very detrimental for the person's growth.

To judge, you have no right, but to understand you have to learn. The half-developed heart usually prescribes "no judgement" instead of admitting incapacity to understand. The fully developed heart is compassionate; it does not have any facades; it does not say, "I am not the judge." It understands that what is ugly is ugly, stupid is stupid, crooked is crooked! Such heart understands but does not care to judge. The no judgement becomes only then valid when one can discriminate. Discrimination is the faculty of your well-developed intellect, whereas the "no judgement" is the faculty of your well-developed

heart. When the two work together there is harmony, there is truth. When the one works and the other is on vacation, then there is falsehood.

Now supposing you see something very objectionable something real dark. All right, your heart remembers the prayer, [Holy Mother chants in Russian) 1 am not to judge my brother," and says, "What are you to say?" You are to say, "It is dark. Understand, 0 my heart, that it is dark but love him! I will not even say that I forgive him because in his shoes I would be the Same, [Whispering] yet it is dark!" By that go. You have to know what is dark and what is light. Otherwise, you are not only a fool but you are a dangerous fool! dangerous for yourself and for the other man. You have to know.

[Holy Mother chants in Russian)

..So in this prayer you have the essence of our Sadhana of Christ...which verily leads to the transcendence of all binding and obsessing pulls of the lower actions!

Om Shanti Jesus the Christ. God bless you in His Name.... [Silence)

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Let us contemplate the fiery heart of Christ Jesus. His incomparable Compassion is combined with Absoluteness, with no compromise, with adamant Power. His classical: "But because thou art neither cold nor hot I spit thee out of My mouth." Let us contemplate that. He would not accept the lukewarm people. He would not accept anything but ardour and purity and perfection and health and beauty and rightness. He would not accept anything and He would not teach anything but absoluteness. He was strong and entirely perfect.... Let us think about that.

First think, and then awaken within yourself that Force which will stir all your being and which will prompt to you the Truth and towards the Truth, which will teach you courage and which will teach you discrimination, subtle discrimination of the purified intellect and ardent love of the purified heart. Let us think about it or else He will not accept us. He will spit us out of His mouth!... [Silence]

[Next morning at the Satsang]

Student: Last night You were beautiful and very intense but when You said one thing, it frightened me a bit about when the Lord said that if we were neither hot nor cold He would spit us out of His mouth....

Valentina: I remember someone else gave me the very same objection. Well, don't be frightened but be intelligent. Understand that exclamation of Jesus the Christ not as condemnation but as Principle with a capital P. There is such Principleif you are lukewarm, you do not belong to Truth! And He (1 described Him as the summit of Sincerity as well as Compassion)on one side He is so compassionate that He did not hesitate to give every drop of His blood. On the other hand, He is so resolute, He is to such an extent the Son of Truth that He would not accept anything but the whole heart, but the whole am not to judge my brother," and says, "What are you to say?" You are to say, "It is dark. Understand, 0 my heart, that it is dark but love him! I will not even say that I forgive him because in his shoes I would be the Same, [Whispering] yet it is dark!" By that go. You have to know what is dark and what is light. Otherwise you are not only a fool but you are a dangerous fool! dangerous for yourself and for the other man. You have to know.

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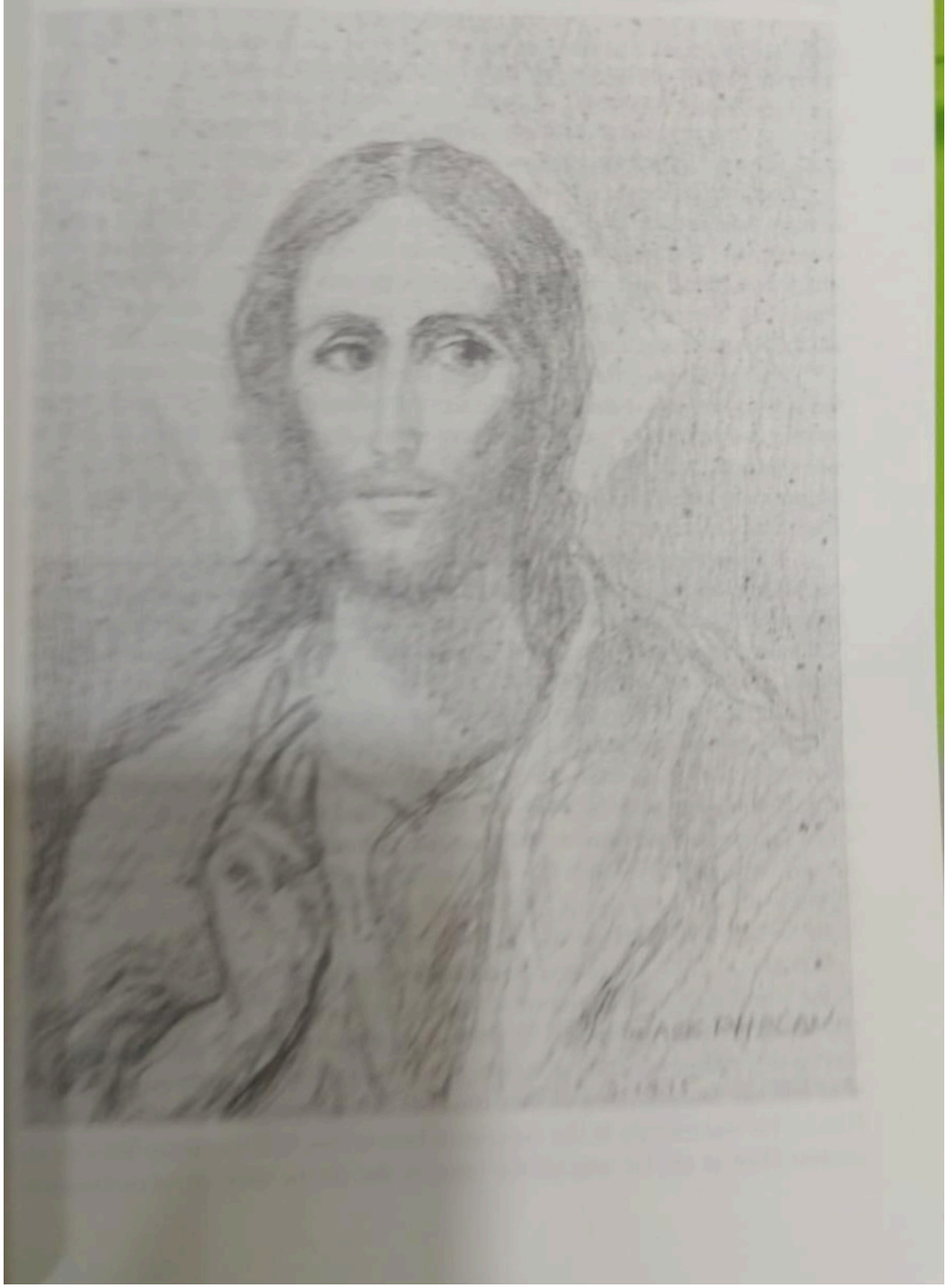
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Easter

March 30, 1975

[Holy Mother chants the Chrestos Voskresee Mantra)

Yes, Chrestos Voskreseel...it means that Christ is resurrected from the dead. He conquered death through His seeming death and He gave life to those who are dead. Chrestos Voskresee. Voistinu Voskresee. [Holy Mother chants over and over)

Chrestos Voskresee it means that Christ is resurrected. "I am the Resurrection and the Life." It means there is no death in Christ, and this we shall contemplate. The more you contemplate it, the more you win over everything which is untruth and everything which is against His Life, His Forever, His Power, His Divinity. So contemplate: "I am the Resurrection and the Life.... I am the Resurrection and the Life.... I am the Resurrection and the Life"....

"I am the Resurrection and the Life" is a very, very profound statement. To feel it is to know that there is the Immortal Being which all the time is resurrecting every tissue of your body, every nerve of your whole being. as well as every mood and every feeling. Just submit to It, trust It.... I am the Beginningless and the Endless Existence, Knowledge and Blissis what is in Truth this statement.

...We want to think about the Forever of Christ, about the victory over everything, about the sacrifice which surpasses all understanding, which is beyond measurethat is what we want to adore. And then only we can say "Chrestos Voskresee." And you should say, "Voistinu Voskresee!"which means, "Verily, He is resurrected!"

[Guru whispers] Chrestos Voskresee. God bless you.

Before we shall perform Japa, let us select the most glorious quality as commanded by Christ, advocated by Christ. Let us think about it. You do not have to think long you will at once love the glorious quality of the Lord with its consequences of forgiveness,

forbearance, compassion, truthfulness, sincerityall based on Love only. But on this day specifically, it is forgiveness, it is forgiveness, it is forgiveness. Did He not say, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they are doing." [Short silence]

It is impossible to practice this great virtue if you are all the time on the level of the world. You have to somehow transcend the world in order to be able to say, "Forgive them, Father" [With increased intenseness] even when you are on the Cross!mind you. But how can you if you cannot forgive even a person who will say a nasty word to you! And He was praying for those who killed Him.... He was entirely in the supermundane realm; this mundane life did not interest Him at all. He was all the time in the divine state of consciousness.

Therefore, if we want to forgive somebody, we have to simultaneously forget something. We have to forget the small things. Then we can forgive even the big things.... [Short silence]

...And yet Christ said also with His power and strength about Judasthat it is indeed much better not to be born at all than to live to betray so atrociously. So you see what complete harmony there is in Christ Jesus' character. There is a forgiveness of God and there is justice of.... well, of God also.... [In a subdued tone).... there is justice of God.... not man. So in order that we might not be judged by the highest Judge, we have to forgive. When we forgive, then we also are forgiven. So let us think about it quietly....

APRIL

Happy first of April to you all! The name of this month is SAKTI!

Sakti is the Divine Energy, the Psychic Energy, the Intelligent Energy of God. The one who can surrender to this Energy lives differently than the one who knows nothing about It and surrenders not at all.

You do not have to know the Sanscrit terminology in order to feel and realize the Psychic Energy! For that is what Sakti is the Divine Energy of God!

Every seeker of Truth gradually comes to find it and every realized man of any religion or any nation or any race knows that there is the Supreme Dynamic Force which operates everywhere, call it the Holy Ghost or the Wonder Child or the Divine Sakti or whatever name! Now, to remember this Power is to become the friend of It; to realize It is to become enlightened and blessed; to surrender to this Power is to fulfill yourself, to attain to GodRealization.

Iworship this Supreme Force, best introduced by the great Hindu Scriptures as Sakti,I am never tired to emphasize this blessed fact! This Force operates without any limitationsit pours and overwhelms!

Student: How does this Energy operate?

Valentina: This mysterious Energy operates in "two cosmoses," in your little one and in the big onein the universe as well as in the man who is a universe en miniaturea little wee bit of a universe! The Psychic Energy within man is not explored sufficiently. The higher part of that Energy if invoked is leading man towards God, just as high as that! That is a mysterious, subtle, psychic energy, the Divine Sakti. When it is not explored and not revealed and not tapped, then it operates in its lower aspect only, in the aspect of desire, urge and indulgence.

When man turns to the higher life, by that very turn his higher energy starts operating. But then, noblesse oblige! One is obliged to follow certain rules if one turns to the higher life, just as you are obliged to follow the certain rules when you are dealing with science. If you do not observe rules in the, for instance, chemical laboratory, you can have an explosion. The very, very same thing is in turning towards the spiritual life. Of course, for your consolation I shall tell you that very few people turn to the higher life; thus you need not worry about the explosion unless you are factually in the laboratory proper!

The fact that you are in the Ashram listening to me is not necessarily a proof that you are turning to the higher life. You all definitely are interested in it, but to turn to the higher life is strict business! It is just like you are turning to any business or any science or any work, you have to study it, you have to commit yourself, you have to dedicate yourself. Now when this kind of dedication is coming, then definitely it becomes imperatively necessary to follow the certain techniques which are prescribed for the acquiring of that higher energy. When it is finally acquired, then the dangers are not the same, because the higher takes charge then of the lower part of the energy, of the energy which operates as sex, which operates as speech, as thought and as feeling. The higher can easily check the excessive speech, or, in general, excessive, indulgent life in any aspect or respect. When that higher is awakened, it controls, assorts, organizes and prescribes!

An ardent aspirant, if he opens his heart and sharpens his will, receives what is called "the Yoga Sakti"although invisible, yet quite tangible. The energy, the concentration, the inspiration to, for instance, persevere in your Sadhana in spite of difficulties, is the receiving of this Yoga Sakti, to some degree. When you become real faithful, the Force repeatedly enters you! You can even invoke it!

Student: How can we invoke, save and preserve this energy?

Valentina: Invoke through devotion, dedication, prayer! Such energy you cannot "preserve" by ordinary means. Such energy actually is not even to preserveit is to acquire through inspiration. For instance, the invocation of Rama is the acquiring of energy! It is not the energy which you save in a prosaic and calculative way through rest, through controlit is the energy which kindles your whole system. It gives you a divine aspiration and ascension, upliftment. You become, so to say, charged, galvanized. This is the energy which guides you. This is the energy which is no more a gross energy, an ordinary physical energy or a nerve energy, but this is the Psychic Energy, the Spiritual Energy.

Student: What would be the state of consciousness of the aspirant who knows that he has the force?

Valentina: It is the mystic only who knows. At times that energy even burns him. There are such cases.

Student: Why, if it is a spiritual energy?

Valentina: I will tell you. The physical to such an extent is behind, out of step with this allconsuming fire, that it cannot cope. All the parts of the body are not yet ready for that enormous velocity. It is too high for the slow and low vibration of the body. That is what you have to understand. Sometimes it is so high and so out of any...ah...correspondence with the grosser cells.... the very cells of the human organism are not suitable for that kind of energy Yet it gives life to every part of the body if the body and the mind and the nerves are sufficiently prepared for it.

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Sakti! It is a ray of God which works through man. Through some men it works more than through other men. And so when one touches, one can heal or bless or inspire. As a matter of fact, everyone has a touch. We either mar or bless whatever we touch. It is like music. You have good fingers for the instrument, you bless it; you have bad fingers, you better don't touch it or else you will mess it up! So in life everything is instrumentalyou can touch and bless, you can touch and curseall depends what kind of "fingers" you have and use! It is very important and true. Everyone knows about the flowers...in some hands the flowers live longer; (With an almost saddened tone) in some hands they die sooner. It all depends on the touch.

Student: Guru, that's beautiful. And it's so beautiful to see in Guru, how Guru's touch heightens and comforts everything.

Valentina: [Smiling with the widely open arms) All right

The Divine Sakti, Mother, is not only poetry; She is a Cosmic fact. And that Cosmic Energy, that Psychic Energy, manifests itself through various channels.

So if someone feels very comfortable here, it is Her Grace through me. God bless you and Iam just the instrument. She is here. [Valentina gracefully and adoringly picks up the rose in front of Her] You see perfect.

...Do not forget, the name of this month is Sakti! The name is a meaningful vibration; it is an intelligent sound of the word which has to be received innerly. Each month dwell on the Ideal which I project.

Om Sakti.



The Birthday of Sivananda-Valentina

April 1,1975

[After spending the day alone, Holy Mother addresses the students)

1 bless all. I thank the Divine for the harmony and beauty of my short seclu sion, for the emanations of love and care from all the corners, for the vibrations of loveliness all around me. I am sending forth my special thoughts which will find the right receptacles, for such is the law, energy is never wasted!

Student: What is the spiritual significance of birthdays?

Valentina: For the thoughtful every birthday is an account, a responsibil ity, a little step towards the evolutionary culmination! Yes, culmination! For if there be any progression there ought to be its culmination too.

Student: How many of the "little steps" does the soul have to make before reaching the culmination?

Valentina: It is a rather idle question! How do I know "how many steps?!"

The ancients taught that the Soul fell from its original Glory and had to pass through millions of births, not in human body but in lower bodies of plants and animals, and that finally came human body which alone was suitable for the higher functioning of Consciousness. (The gods were very pleased with such an improvement upon the cow and the horse, and they could use human body for their purposes!)

We all know only too well that humanity reached some mental evolution

but did not start its spiritual progress. Therefore, many, many efforts are necessary to prepare the new, more refined receptacle which will transcend the human intellect and will be fit for higher spiritual life

Student: But surely man can be proud of his higher achievements!

Valentina: Till now artistic and intellectual drive in man was considered the maximum of cultural and ethical expression. But I say NO! It is only the "half lovely" it didn't answer any questions of the seeking, knocking and sobbing conscious being within us! Thus, I do not consider your highest achievements as the culmination! Go higher. Dare! Plod on and develop the SPIRITUAL WILL! To become an idealist, an aesthete, an artist, a leader, a religionist, a whatever you may hold as the best, is only the human best.

Student: Could You pinpoint the invalidity of human achievements?

Valentina: Perhaps, if I would mention Napoleon, who sneered at "human highest achievements"I will pinpoint it for you! For Napoleon the word "ideologist" was equivalent to the word hypocrite. He was sceptical of men of tall talk he called them "the manufacturers of phrases," but he esteemed men of deep thought. He respected science, but of the medical achievements he was sceptical, to one famous doctor he said: "We would be better off without all your remedies, believe me! Medicine is a sum total of vague prescriptions, the collective result of which is more fatal to humanity than helpful. Water, air and cleanliness are the main articles in my pharmacopea!"

So this was the insight of a genius psychologist and observer about the doubtful validity of human proud accomplishments. Yet he greatly valued wit of thought, true wisdom, great art as well as a bon mot, to put it in my parlance, "everything backed by the Divine Sakti!"

Student: You seem to bow to Napoleon?!

Valentina: By no means I bring him as the authority on human values, indeed not! But his judgenient of human achievements was sharp, practical and to the point. If he would be less Asuric in directing his gigantic willhe could have started the new evolution. It is so

clear! He was an incredible Titanic Force with the "magnificent, powerful arms" of Sumbha and Nisumbha, with verily no scrutiny as regards ethics but fantastic scrutiny as regards his success! Yet he was a genius of the intellect so vast and daring, so quick in evaluation, estimation, perspective, that it would be a shortsighted blunder to label him as the "dark force." He was a Cosmic Force, no doubt about it, and acted like the instrument of Cosmic destruction. He was the master of small and great situations. He said about himself that he is not cruel,he is just a child of Fate. Yes, he was strangely performing some great Cosmic show...but his genius was marred by the Asuric featureintensest egoity,that is why he couldn't start the new constructive evolutionary rung.

So it is not that I blindly "bow to Napoleon," but I hope this very brief reference to one of my "much admired friends"Napoleon Bonapartewould illustrate clearly my own sceptical attitude to human achievements. Seldom there is any permanency in human feats.

Student: What then has permanency?

Valentina: The Divine Will behind human accomplishments.

Student: Example?

Valentina: Christ, Buddha, Shankar and a few more such.... and those unto

them.

Student: Who is suitable for such heights?

Valentina: Only the elite! From the functions on the uptonow available planes one has to go into far subtler plane of spirituality.

Student: Don't You live in an ivory tower?

Valentina: [Laughs) If I wouldI wouldn't talk with you at length and love you all! No, I don't live in the tower, but I have deep faith in the Divine Splendour which descends and uplifts, at first, the selected few, and then heightens the standards of the whole human family.

the inner life. I know, (I am absolutely positivel), that such heightening is never It is time for at least a few in human race to start conscious heightening of possible unless there be certain sacrifices. That in us which is stubborn and willful and prefers to live according to whims and fancies, impulses and mechanical orientations, should be checked and sacrificed.

Student: Why is it so difficult?

Valentina: Because almost no one in average mankind is ready to practice the high ideals! The moment Ideals are brought down to the pragmatic manthey become cartoons. And now that I mentioned Napoleon.... He saw very well that pragmatic mind measures everything by its own yardstick, squeezing the heights into the habitual narrow and shallow levels. That is, he didn't believe any tall talk! Till ideals become real to us, we cannot do much. We profane them, talk giddy things, we criticize our forefathers, establish even more defective "new societies."

Student: Don't You think that the masses today are more advanced than in the ancient days?

Valentina: Advanced in what? In copying the civilized man?! The masses of humanity are never spiritual or even intellectual.

Student: Then why so much effort to promote the masses?

Valentina: It is not the question of promotion of the masses. It is a question of promoting the individual. If the individuals are well educated not in informational knowledge but in the heightening of their ethics, aesthetics and consequently in the discovery of the inner Reality, you will promote your masses too!

Student: You sound exceptionally daring on Your birthday!

Valentina: Yes, on the First of April I am even more bold than on every other day of the year! I declare that I care only for the divinization of the individual human heart and mind. And I bless those who feel fit to join me. Will you say Amen?!

Student: Hardly one dares to say anything after this flight. But…how can I reach You, come closer to You, work with You?

Valentina: Without Sadhana, no one can come near me! Sadhana is exertion, ceaseless control and discipline. Most people think that they practice Sadhana if they have a Puja room, or a tiger skin, or rosary! Or if they gather together and talk about God. Or if they go on pilgrimage. This kind of conduct is not the Spiritual Sadhana which can establish the inner life. Spiritual life is very subtle. It is not how many good things you are doing outwardly; it is how quiet, pure, noble, controlled and ardent you are within. The work is absolutely a zero unless you add a unit of inner quality to it. The first UNIT is Measure.

Student: Do You mind to give an example of "measure?"

There are thousands of examples, but let us select the measure of speech, for instance, which, if achieved and practiced, would at once heighten your mental quality. Measured speech is far more difficult than total silence.

Student: Why should it be so? I find it extremely difficult to be silent.

Valentina: Go away from life and you will not have to talk at all! What would be your merit and how would you test your selfcontrol? Measured speech is real art. So is sincere, that is to say, conscious silence, of course. Both are parallel. When you say more than should be said, you commit an offense against the Divine Sakti.

Student: How can we "measure" our measure?

Valentina: Just a day ago, I asked the student, "How much kinder has the profound Passion Week Sadhana made you?" Yes, it is by the "how much purer," that your progress is "measured." How much less offensive you are?! I hope it is somewhat clearer to you.

Student: Yes, it is, and now that You so resolutely and comprehensively explained about it, could You point out the second and the third, what You called, "units?" If there be the first, there must be the second!?

Valentina: The second, it seems to me, is right attitude. The third, enthu siasm, spark! These three units are very potent and they make the zeroes of your ordinary works weighty, big. Sakti is behind all great units!

Preparation For Ramanavami

Om Rama. In a week, it will be the holy, the great, the sacred Ramanavami remembrance of the great Incarnation of the Divine, Sri Ramachandra, or Rama.

Ithink of Lord Rama when he was a little Rama, a child. And at the early adolescent age he received insight into the inevitability of suffering. And His sad conclusionwhat is this life? In adolescent age, man and woman, that is to say, girl and boy, are assailed by lust. Later on they are assailled by lust plus struggle for survival and successearning the money, losing the money, fighting the life, craving fame and name, very much immersed in greedy selfassertion, in finding their position, asserting it and preserving it, competing, and so forth. And later on, if they do have their wealth, they often have lost their health; they pay with the disease for their inordinate ambitions, a lot of struggle. So what is it? In the youth it is lust; in the mature age, it is struggle; in the old age it is disease! Very dark, is it not?!

And Rama lost, completely, interest for life, for His Kingdom, for His relatives, (I told you this story many times), and was sitting down contemplating that which He saw and perceived, and seeking the way out. He was exposed then to the Sages, and His Guru Sage said that "Rama will come out of this gloom and combat the paradox of life!" And He, of course, did for.... He was Rama! Rama did combat life; He did not accept that which He saw in His youth. But, was it a pessimistic outlook? Not really. Rama did not subscribe to life of fear and to life of death and to life of defeat and to life of clinging to

lust and wealth. No! He just clearly saw certain facts the way they are. But then Rama had His résumé even in His youth. He said that the only man who is not afflicted by all the terrible insecurity of life is the man who lives the inner life, the life of Spirit. In other words, there is the way out and all the things which the wise man does notice all those paradoxes, absurdities and humiliationsthey are connected only with physical life and with mental life, but not with spiritual life....

Student: If we are not yet ready for such inner life, how can we prepare ourselves? Is it to try to be good and live a good life?

Valentina: Yes. But don't try too hard. One should have purity for good life. Also one should be aware that "good life" is often only "goodygoody." What can be more boring than the outer piousness! I cannot help stressing this because I know by experience that all the sentimental concerns about our fellow men result in nothing. You can speak kind words, but if you even for one moment think that you have done something "good" you have done nothing. True love is humble, unassuming and spontaneous.

Student: Yes, spontaneous...something You have but I don't!

Valentina: [Hesitatea a moment] Shall I tell you a Russian storyyou then will feel exactly what is spontaneity! Once upon a time there was a Prince of great riches, physical beauty, education and all worldly powers. But he was hateful and dangerous. When he had committed some exceptionally sinful act, an Angel of Justice appeared before him and said: "You do not deserve to rule your kingdom. All your subjects will fall asleep and you will be the only one left in a waking state. You will not fall asleep, neither will you live in peace until you will perform some utterly unselfish, pure and loving deed."

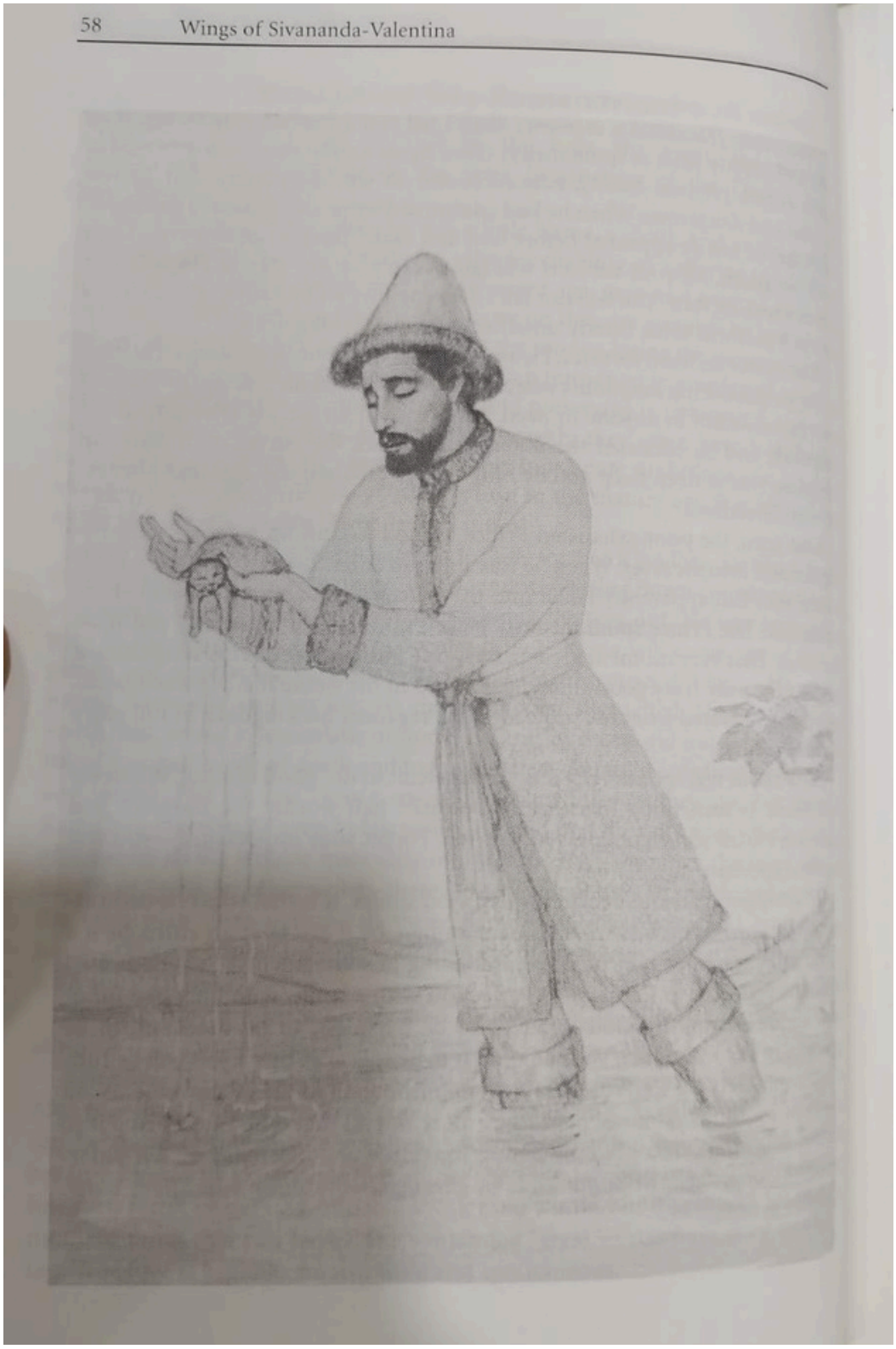
The Prince suffered tortures. He was trying to perform good deeds. He went to the neighbouring kingdoms where there was normal life. He distributed his enormous wealth to anyone in need. He preached virtue. He encouraged the desperate and he educated the illiterate. But, alas, the curse continued his kingdom was in deep sleep and he himself was tortured day and night by terrible recollections.

One time, the poor exhausted Prince wanted to commit suicide by throwing himself into the river. When he was about to enter the water, he saw a small kitten who had apparently

fallen into the water and was trying desperately to come out. The Prince spontaneously picked up the little kitten and put it on the sand. That very moment great peace came into his mind. This insignificant act was the only truly good thing he ever did in his whole life. He was instantaneously liberated from his sufferings and regained his kingdom in full glory and normality!

So without real spontaneity it is very difficult to do "good things!" Whatever you think is something meritorious becomes halfworthy the moment you have attributed some goodness to yourself. Forget your importanceyou will become spontaneous!

..Truly good action is that at which God smiles. It is that which is dedicated to the Lord regardless what you are doingbe it art, be it an attire, be it a song, or be it a poetry, or be it some cooking in some kitchen! It is dedicated to Rama Nama or to Rama or to Perfection with a smile, with only one innocent desire to please God that is, to be harmless, to be innocent, to be graceful in His Eyes. Then you can offer it to people also. But if you will be running around trying to please people, establishing all kinds of movements, all kinds of meetings, all kinds of Yoga Centers and all that without offering it to Rama, it is amiss. You are only acting for selfaggrandizement or selfentertainment or escape, or some kind of prestige, the outer education; outer, mind you, not inner.



Ramanavami

April 20, 1975

Sri Ramachandraya Namaha!

These days are permeated with the vibration of Rama, and I have been deeply pondering upon the captivating, breathtaking story of Rama's Life,His unsurpassable character, His compassion and nobility. Indeed it is difficult to talk about the whole Ramayana. One usually dwells upon various episodes. Each such episode offers the whole gamut of feelings and deepest ponderings.... [Silence]

Iwill take the instances which deal with Rama's exile. I will tell you how He was finally going. The crowd was speechless around Him; there were people by thousands and maybe even millionsthe whole Kingdomyou couldn't see them in the back. And do you know what? They say that you could hear the needle drop, such silence there was. Considering the amount of people, it is hard to imagine. There was such silence and such.... such reverence, such prayerful attitude, such adoration. Everybody was choked with tears and could not talk.

When Rama was about to leave for exile where he was unjustly and atrociously sent, Bharatha, who was elected for the Kingdom, not only was not rejoicing at it, but was badly wounded and desperately ashamed. A Hero, he thought, a Godman, Rama, should go into exile due to the oppositions of his jealous, overly ambitious stepmother who in turn was influenced by her evilminded little hunchedback favouritea scandalmonger, a gossiper, a hateful troublemaker! This little "hunchy" cared only for her mistress and had enormous influence upon her. And the noble old king, the father of Rama, was trapped into skillfully madeup intrigue and had to fulfill the request of his pretty but silly queen, who demanded the exile of Rama and the enthroning of her own son Bharatha. Bharatha, however, was noble and devoted. He prostrated endlessly to Rama, begging and pleading, "May You please go on the throne and I shall go into exile instead." Both of them were stressing the point of sac

rifice! Rama wouldn't consider it proper to accept the throne, so He went. Student: I really don't fathom it. Why such a strong man as Rama had to accept such humiliation?

Valentina: [Smiles) Probably, precisely because...He was "such a strong man!" There was a purpose for it. Aside from being a "strong man," He was also an Incarnation of the very Divine; He could do what He pleases if He would choose to. If it would be necessary for

the wellbeing of the whole Universe, let us say, certainly He would not so easily sacrifice the throne. But the point is that was an excuse for Him to protect the Universe through various heroic exploits which are masterfully described in the best Epic every produced, the Ramayana. Sounds to the ordinary prosaic ear as fantasies, as legends, as fairy tales, as something absolutely unacceptable for the sober, pragmatic mind. But such sober minds are not to judge that which can be perceived by a poet, a seer, a mystic...a lover! [Silence]

Well, back to SitaRam! Sita, of course, did not even dream of staying in the Kingdom and having luxuries when the adorable One, the Rama, would be going into exile. So He says, "Well, She chose to follow Me, She will have to do a lot of walking and hiking. Let us walk out now." But, of course, they put them in the chariot and the mobs would not let them move. But Rama's word is the Law! Always the Law.... He says, [As if parting the crowds with Her arms] "Out." Lakshmana, his faithful brother, insisted on accompanying them. And it was Lakshmana who brought them to the forest. He was an engineer par excellence, a very, very industrious fellow! So he started from scratch. "Well, what should I build for them? Ahh, there are big banana leaves;" so he made a hut. [Smiling] He made it very lovely! And so Rama and Sita settled in the forest. And then, Rama looked at Sita and looked at the flowers and He thought, "Just wondering which one is which? Is that Sita or is that the flower? Absolute Perfection." Whatever He saw in Nature of beauty and perfection, He saw in Sita, for She was Perfect just as He was. "Well," Rama thought to Himself, "but that is not why I came here. I always know that Sita is perfect, that is nothing new. And I know that we are perfect in our union. But I came here to liberate this earth from the demons. I came here to make the evolution of people more possible. I came here to fight!"

There was.... you know who Ravana was, I am sure you know, that was Rama's greatest enemy the monster with many heads (I think it was ten heads). Can you imagine?! Huge, absolutely, absolutely unconquerable! And he was ruling the whole universeRakshasa and Asura combinedwealth enormous, powers enormous, corruption too enormous.... And so, Rama's task was to destroy this monster Ravana and also to establish righteousness on earth.... Now, it occurred to me how subtly creeps in the delusive power into the manifested life. The dangers of the delusive power...the strength it acquires and displays!

Student: Aren't, at times, the Asuras even stronger than the gods?

Valentina: Not that they are stronger, but their opposition, their campaign against the Light, is fierce, and indeed it takes Rama to clear the Space and get rid of them. They are incredibly delusive and deceptive, also very materialistic Student: You once said the earth is under the asuric swayhow come?

Valentina: [Smilingly) Well, if it isn't under the Divine influence, isn't it logical to assume it is ruled, or at least influenced very strongly, by the undivine? Surely you will agree with me that life on earth, the way it is, is not too harmonious. The humans on earth echo the Asuras, for they are very fond of matter.... Blessed are those who do not lose the contact with God and with gods.... Listen, when Rama...Rama... Rama was incarnated, even He was limited by Maya. Look at through what deception of Ravana He had to go, through what tricks He was trapped. [Turning to a student) Do you understand me?

Student: Yes, I do, although it's hard to imagine Rama could be deceived. It would be such a boon if Guru would illustrate it, not just for me to read it, but to hear You and see how You live everything You speak!

Valentina: Well, I am thinking now about Rama in the forest chasing a magic deer and at that moment being, as it were, under the spell and losing His Divine awareness. The story goes like that: Ravana, the tenheaded monster, the oppressor of the whole Universe, went to see his uncle (I wish I remembered his name, starts with M...ah, it seems to me it is something like Mareekha, whom Rama already defeated and who had decided out of fear and also out of enormous reverence to Rama, because nobody could help it, to turn to the pious life. So when Ravana asked his advice how to capture Sita whom he was raving about, this uncle of his refused to cooperate.

Student: Please, this too I don't understand, Guru! To me it is so strange that Ravana could be so strongly overwhelmed by Sita.

Valentina: Why is it so strange to you?!

Student: Well, I remember it is said that he was very lustful and had every goodlooking woman in his possession. How could he be so madly infatuated by Sita who not only was beautiful but differently beautiful! How could a monster like the truly beautiful?!

Valentina: That is a preconceived idea! Really amusing. Why shouldn't Satan be weeping for God?! And also, Ravana was not an ordinary beast. He had "taste" for the best of the best. Even as in our culture some perverse, totally sickinmind sensualists, parallely, are known as geniuses in art and worshipers of beauty!

As a matter of fact, Ravana's sister, the horrible Rakshasi, fell in love with Rama! The most paradoxical and monstrous situation! And that is most interesting. That was prior to the disappearance of Sita when she, the Asuri, saw Rama and Lakshmana as ascetics roaming around the forest, hunting. She was a very powerful Rakshasa and she knew how, through various special invocations, to assume the form she loved best. Originally and naturally it was an ugly monster. According to the legend, those Rakshasas, those Asuras in the most horrible form, were enormous, with the teeth which even the tigers do not have. And they were living on blood of the animals and of men. But she saw Rama who was...(Smiling radiantly] I'm telling you, Rama is Rama! so whoever sees Him falls in love even the monsters. And through invocations, she assumed a form of such perfection of a woman that there are no words to describe and there are no painters to paintjust like a chiseled figure, absolute

loveliness, beauty personified, and away she went! Rama came out and was startled, could not imagine... "Who are you?"

She says, "I am the sister of Ravana."

"You? the sister of Ravana?!"

"I am the sister of Ravana."

"Oh, perfect one" [Ironically]"how do you have such a form, being a sister of Ravana?"

"My outer beauty is the result of my pure aspiration. I decided to change, my views are different. I am now praying; I want to be with saints, with sages; I don't want to be with my kinsmen."

"Ummm.... what can I do for you?"

"Well, it is unfit and unsuitable for a woman to confess certain.... [Miming with Her eyes the womanly wiles...] [Laughter]...but...."...silent mime!

Rama said, "Hummm!" And then He said, "Sita." Came out Sita and the "perfect one" looked at Sita and almost was blinded because she saw only the Light; she could not even see the woman. [Silence]

There was a rather grotesque dialogue in which the Rakshasi revealed totally her real nature. You see, regardless how alluring the dark entity can appear, scratch it and you will see the horrible face.... She gave most cynical arguments, and even reduced her appetites, instead of Rama, she was ready to land with Lakshmana. At that point, the fierce warrior Lakshmana ended the tragicomical situation by the swordhe disfigured the face and the body of the Rakshasi and she left cursing and screaming. She ran to Ravana, shouting aloud, "Look, brother, look what they did to me."

He saw her in despair, in bleeding and in tears and was annoyed and disturbed. "Who did it to you?"

"Who else but Rama and his brother." Here she used the tactics which are used very often by man. She would not, of course, disclose her own passion to Rama, but she disguised it as the service to Ravana. She says, "Of course I went there in order to snatch her for you."

"Who is that 'her, and why do you have to bother for me?"

"Well, brother, you have everything which is very beautiful but you don't have the most beautifulsomething hard to imagine."

"Ummmimnm?! Who is that 'most' precious one?!" "Rama's wife who else! Sita!"

"Well, tell me about her."

The Rakshasi did not spare words, and described Sita in all Her glory to the minutest detail. And from then on started the ailing of Ravana. He was totally intoxicated. The Rakshasi had her own plans. She thought that if Ravana would get Sita and Rama would be alone, then maybe she will be able to use her great charms again, this time more successfully. You see how absurd is the mentality of the impure. Don't you know these things very often happen with the human beings also? Don't you know that there is no sequence, no harmony, no common sense, no logic in the impure mind? The demands and hopes of the Asuras are the most grotesque and most chimerical. Is it not similar to the hopes of the human being who doesn't have anything but inflamed nervous system and endless lustful desires?! Indeed Asuras simply train the human beings along their own lines.

When Ravana heard all this, he immediately formed up a campaign in his head. He decided to act in such a manner that arrangements could be made for getting into Sita's privacy when neither Rama nor Lakshmana were around, and then, of course, to either convince Her or to take Her by force. And for that purpose, he thought nobody could serve him better than his very learnedinalloccultsciences uncle.... So I hope you are now somewhat more in the mood of seeing rather than doubting and questioning?!

Student: Your magic, Ma'am. I have no questions!

Valentina: Enough!

Student: No, no! You started to tell us about Ravana and his uncle!

Valentina: Well, sincere demand invites sincere supply! [Laughter] Ravana visited his learned relative and related to him his plan. When his uncle heard the story, he said, "You better stay away from Rama." Ravana wouldn't stop and asked emphatically for cooperation. "You just go ahead and assume a form of the alluring golden deer and so Rama will start fighting it and I'll in the meantime assume the form of the old monk and capture Sita."

And the poor uncle of Ravana, he knew that would definitely be his end, for Rama's Bow never, never misses, you see? And yet he wouldn't be daring to say "no" to Ravana

because (according to the Scriptures) Ravana was the lord of the Universe at that time, complete lordship. There was no such thing as "no" to Ravana. All the objects of beauty and power and even character and of any validity were imprisoned by him because of his unsurpassable might. Evil he was, but mighty he was too.

Well, where are we?! Yes, the deer.... That relative of Ravana finally had also to listen to him. He did assume the form of the unsurpassably beautiful creature, the exquisite little deer who appeared in front of Rama's retreat. The moment Sita saw him, She exclaimed, [In the Divine childlike voice of Sita)

"Rama! Look! The deeer! Look, look. The sapphires in his eyes and in his hoofs. And oh, I want him for a pet. Go ahead quickly." Lakshmana says, "Are you well, my friends?! What are you talking about? That's a magic. There are no such things as golden deer."

Sita gave him an expressive look. She said, "What kind of an imagination do you have? How crude of you." Rama looked at Sita, all charmed by Sita's charm and He said, "She is now sharing my exile and I wouldn't give Her as much as a pet?!" He said to Lakshmana, "Lakshmana, in the creation of Brahma nothing is impossible. Why shouldn't the deer be with the sapphire eyes and the golden hair? Come on, let's look." Sure enough, the deer was the very way Sita described. Lakshmana said, "Stop it! Give me the bow. I'm going to get it for you." And then Sita says, "You will not! Who can do it as well as Rama?"

Well, you see how deluded everybody felt at that moment, (Vividly) except, by the way, Lakshmana, who was able to remain sagely through his absolute devotion to the both Divinities; he knew that it is not right. So Rama says, "Just hold on, I'll be back in a second!" And said, "In the meantime, please watch Sita" that He remembered very well! So Lakshmana was watching Her, and Rama went away hunting for the deer and He didn't even notice how far He went into the debris of the forest. But finally He realized it was a trick because the deer was very, very evasive. And when He found himself being drifted too far from His retreat, He then decided not to catch the deer but to kill him. His arrow never missed a single target1 keep on stressing that. That is the most enchanting thing to remember. The deer, at his last breath, cried a human cry, "Help! Help! Help, Sita, Lakshmana, heeelp!" And Sita heard it. She became absolutely lifeless when She heard that, was so horrified and in such terrible grief; She thought that it's He calling, you see?

And then.... Lakshmana says, "Shsh! Nothing can hurt Rama. How can you doubt Rama's omnipotence?" Sita says, "My Lord, He called me! Lakshmana, I heard it." So after a long argument She induced Lakshmana to go in search of Rama. At that moment Sita was also

personifying all the human sentiments, and who can resist the maximum of feminine charm?! You can imagine the irresistibility of Sita's charm. Who could stand Her tears? Finally, even Lakshmana could not. And so Lakshmana obeyed Her and left Her alone. and that was the tragedy of Sita....

Ravana, in the form of an emaciated old recluse, appeared almost instantaneously after Lakshmana left. He knocked on the door and said, [In a pitiable voice) "Here comes a hungry monk, won't you open the door?" And Sita, of course, immediately opened the door, because kindness, hospitality and very great empathy was Her nature. And so he came in; he didn't grab Her; he was immensely enchanted. He thought, "Oh, that sister of mine, (You remember I told you about that Rakshasi?!), she didn't deceive me. It is all true, that's all true. Oh, oh, what a beauty! Oh, all the goddesses I have are nothing!" You see, he had various goddesses serving him, and all the women, human women, who were worthwhile being around him, he had in his harem everyone! Yet he never saw anything like it. Small wonder, for that was Lakshmi. Till now, he was in such agony of passion only through the hearing, only through the description of Sita's perfection, and now he had a chance to actually visualize. So you can imagine how it affected his whole being. He was beside himself, assailed by the intensest passion.... Are you interested?

Student: Oh, Guru! I wanted to yell out even last night when Guru was telling the story. "Please don't stop." So at least now, please, please continue. Although we can read it ourselves, but then it is only a written word. But, when You talk, it becomes life and alive. Isee Sita! It is almost an impossibility after Your narrative, to open any book.

Valentina: [Childlike] Go on! Really?!

Student: Upon my word.

Valentina: Okay. Here goes.... Rama, Rama, Rama.... Yes. So... Ravana, in the form of that monk was discussing with Her, answering Her questions. She asked, "How is it, revered sir, that you are here and not in the forest, or for that matter, in some good city where you could live normally?"

"Oh, I am in the land of the Asuras."

"That's exactly what I mean, how can you be?"

"Why not?"

"Well, those ones are horrible, beastly demons."

"My dear beautiful lady, you are mistaken. Asuras are not bad; Asuras are wonderful. They have vitality, strength, and they can govern the gods themselves and they do! And all the Nature obeys them; they have now reached the climax of their development. It's a fantastic race! And Ravana is their chief, and he is unconquerable. He is so powerful; he is so glorious."

And Sita was amazed and She said, "How can they be good, they are dark forces and moreover," She said, "their days are numbered, for my Lord Rama is to clean the earth from this horror!"

And the "monk" was absolutely indignant; he couldn't bear it. He says, "No human being can ever dare even to dream about killing them or doing any harm to Ravana."

And then Sita said, "Haven't you heard just recently when we were attacked by Asuras, and there was a very powerful one, Ravana's own brother, and there was a woman, a powerful Asuri, his sister, and we crushed them all in spite of all their tricks! Don't you know that?!"

And then he was quite a bit annoyed and he says, "Ah, they were weaklings compared to...compared to...me. I mean, ah.... ah.... hmpf.... Ravana." And he tried to belittle Rama, and he said, "Wait till you will hear Ravana. Your Rama is nothing compared to him! Ravana has twenty shoulders and your Rama only two!"

And then She said, "Ha! Twenty shoulders! You just look at the two shoul ders of my Lord! then you'll know what you are talking about. Your Ravana will be crawling and begging for pardon!"

Ahha. At that point Ravana, the horror of all the three worlds, couldn't stand it! He started to really boil inside. And gradually he was changing his saintly appearance and then suddenly assumed his natural form. She was, of course, shattered to pieces.

He said, "You know what, woman?! For this humiliating and idiotic statement I would have eaten you, but you are woman and I want you, and if I won't have you, I'll die." And he started to sing the praise describing Her beauty, and he says that he will make Her his queen and that She will command him to do whatever. And She wouldn't listen to a single word. She covered Her ears and She was just entirely shaken. She shouted, "How dare you talk to mein my presence, how dare you talk about my Lord! I'm not at all afraid to lose my life, but if you want to save yours, you'd better run away!or RRRama will smash you!" And She says that Rama's arrows never miss anything. And he says many, many, many horrible things to Her about his passion, asking Her to have mercy upon him. And fell on the floor trying to beg Her. And then She shouted, "Rama, Rama, Rama, Brother Lakshmana, help me!"

There was an ancient curse that if Ravana will touch any woman without her consent, he would instantaneously die. So he, instead of touching Her, was just.... just prostrated at Her feet literally. He said, "Have pity on me, be my Queen. I prostrate before You, don't You see? I don't prostrate before anybody but You."

At that moment it occurred to him that he can capture Her without touching Her, thus without the danger of violation of the curse. He dug the earth under Her feet and lifted Her with the earth without touching Her directly and then carefully placed Her in his chariot.

Sita was in the profoundest grief. She fainted and then She recovered. Then She tried to jump out of the chariot. Her tears and lamentations had no end. She was pitiably addressing Nature, the birds, the animals, the trees, the little folks of the forest to bear witness and to quickly tell Rama about the happenings. And then She indignantly turned to Ravana and cursed him. She told him that he is the worst of all the cowards, the miserable nothing, that he dares to go against Rama! He was afraid to face Rama and therefore uses tricks instead of fighting Rama! To what Ravana, with genuine haughtiness, totally despising Her words and yet being very much amused and charmed by Her, said laughingly, "Do you think I would care to fight the human being? That is below my dignity!" To what Sita said, "You monster! Below your dignity! And is it not below your dignity to

attack the defenseless woman?!" Ravana got a real kick! He was real, real, real enchanted, a'cause he thought it is the greatest!

At that moment, the Eagle, who was a disguised god, who was a friend of the father of Rama and who promised to keep an eye, his eagle eye, on RamaSita, and who noticed the disaster, came close to Ravana and shouted a challenge. He obstructed Ravana's chariot and was swaying with all his strength and power and might above the heads of Ravana He was even as a huge mountain, very powerful, and he pleaded with Ravana. He said, "Hey you, suppose you'll release Sita and I will not touch you. Neither should you be afraid of Rama if you will let Sita down. But if you won't listen to me, you will meet a disgraceful death, if not from me, then by all means from the arrow of Rama. Simply let Her come down. I will escort Her to Rama."

Ravana just treated him as something despicable, didn't at all take him seriously and at first even wanted to spare him. He laughed at this proposal and said, "You senile bird!" [Laughter] "Get out of my sight!" The Eagle got real, real furious and said, "You better don't seek your own death because you will be perished and all your clan will be also! There is such weapon as Rama's Arrow, don't forget it." And the Eagle's name, by the way, was Jatayu. And then Ravana was real fed up and he said, "Get out of my sight! Whatever, even if it would be true, which it isn't true, do you think I would separate with this precious treasure?! Do you really think so? She will go with me."

Now, of course, Sita was absolutely in despair and burst into bitterest tears. But the Eagle, Jayayu, was consoling Her. He says, "Don't fear anything. RRama! And this demon will be destroyed by all means, I will take care of that!" So he started to flap his tremendous wings and he shattered everything. He even paralyzed Ravana and his chariot. Ahh! Then he fell on the monster and threw his whole body and claws with such force that it is said that Ravana's coat of arms, the symbol of which was a veena, (a string instrument) was shattered. You see, Ravana wasn't only a monster; he was a very versatile monster! He even was a virtuoso musician. Can you imagine that? So the Eagle tore this ensign and it fell apart. That was, for Ravana, the signal that he should act more. So he took out his magic sword, given to him for his penances, (for Asuras can perform penance!), by Siva Himself. And that sword was a magic one. It is called Chandrahasa. He struck with the magic sword, this giant bird, Jatayu, and pierced his heart. After that, Ravana picked himself up, threw away his chariot, which was ruined, and took Sita on his shoulder, mind you, with the piece of ground between them, you see? And then he took to his ability to fly in the air. He could travel very easily in the astral form in space. And that was the time

when poor, dear, beautiful Sita was throwing her little jewels on earth so that Rama could find them and know where She is. Yes....

Then Rama and Lakshmana, who were in great anxiety, searchingthey came that way where Jatayu was about to die. And before he died.... it was touching he was able to keep himself alive through an enormous exercise of will power, so that he can report precisely to Rama what happened. He postponed death in order to meet Rama, can you imagine that?! Beauty?!... [Pause) So, with his dying breath, he gave the whole picture to Rama and he said also, that, "Of course Rama will have to succeed." Rama, with great anguish, asked the heroic Bird, "Please, please, quickly tell me, where, what direction should I take." But, alas, Jatayu gave up his last breathdied before he could give the answer. [Silence] And now I am back to my same wonder. I can't but repeat again, that even Rama, a Perfect Man, an Incarnation of Vishnu in the human body, automatically became subject to some human limitations.

Student: That I can't buy. How can an Avatara shed tears? How can Sita scream from emotion!

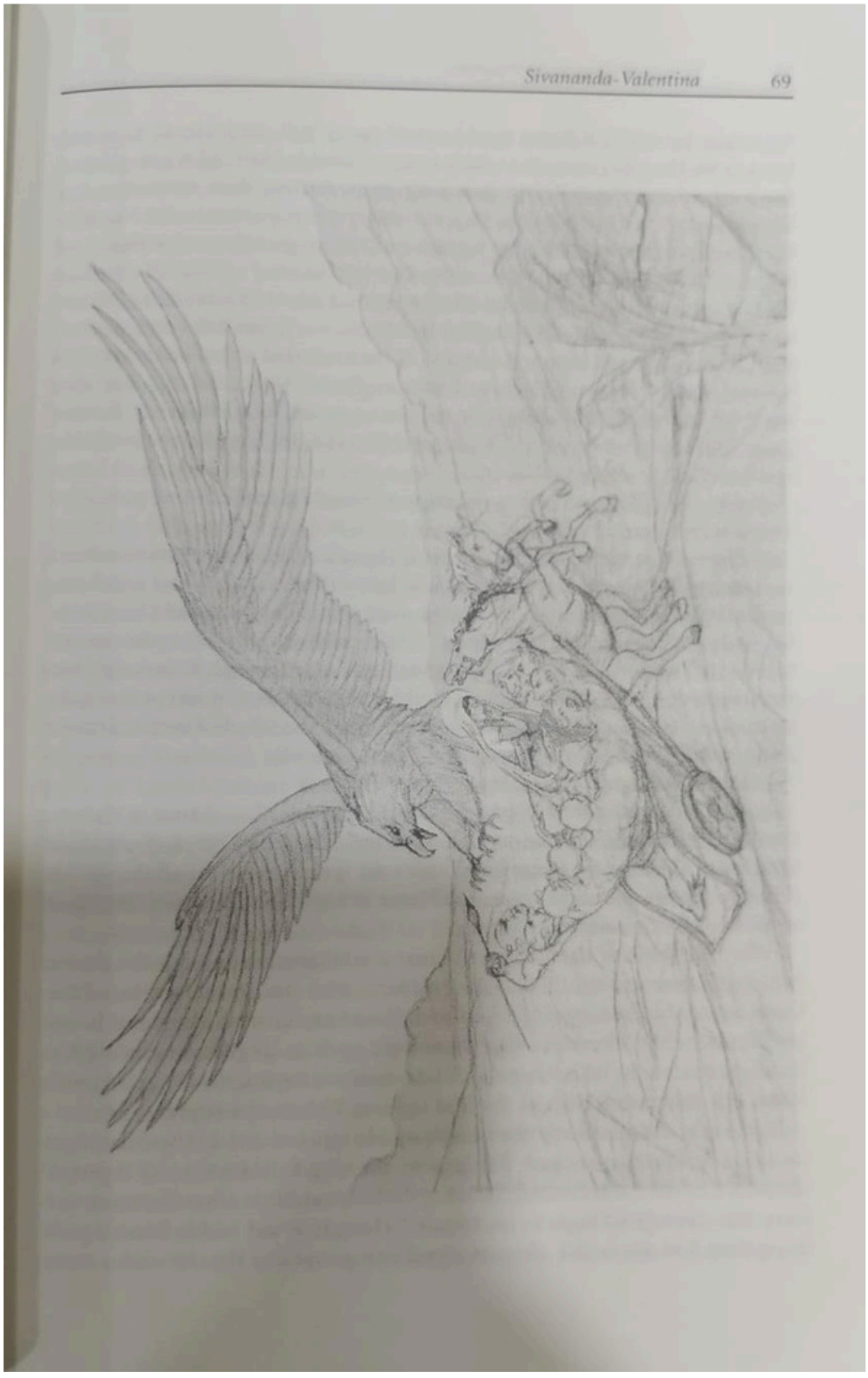
[Valentina sizes the student up with such a look that....]

Student: Mercy! [Laughter]

Valentina: Better hands up. I don't owe an answer to such a remark but out of "mercy" I'll give you one. [Uproar]

Seriously, now! Your remark, indeed, denotes preconceived exoteric ideas. For most Western religionists, it is a shocking thought that man can become God or God can take a human form. Exception is only Jesus, and does not this monopoly cause veritable wars between Christianity and other theistic, formal religions? Mark the word "formal"for aside from its formality and rigidity, every great religion has a special esoteric, deeply mystical corner where all petty arguments cease and absorption into inner experience becomes the only validity.

Student: I'm not all that narrow, but what puzzles me is why couldn't the Incarnation maintain the full power and identity. Why couldn't Rama be Vishnu personified without human limitations?



Valentina: My Child, if Rama would come here as "fullsize Vishnu" He would burn, with His vibrations, the whole material world. The God has to assume the form of man in order to deal with man. Avatara does remember His Identity, yet out of compassion, He, to such an extent immerses into His role, that, naturally, He is colored by the joys and sufferings, tears and smiles.... of human experiences. What a ridiculously limiting attitude! Even a Shakespearean actor feels himself Hamlet or Macbeth or Othello if he at all has a spark of a genius. Well, do you think that Rama is a "lesser actor and creator" than Shakespeare and those who act him?! Further, what would be the merit if Vishnu would come as Vishnu, or Christ as Christ, without any human element left in them? How could they convince you, oh Johnny? Hence, Rama's great difficulties and despairs! This is a sacrifice of God! For how else could He reach the hearts of men? [Silence)

Student: May we come back to the story of Rama? I promise I won't pester You anymore by my own limitations!

Valentina: Are there enough witnesses? [Laughter] With an open mind and true concentration and interest, as well as love to Rama and to that which He represents, with such attitude only, you can partake of Ramayana innocently, purely, yet knowingly and consciously. With such attitude only, you can see, for instance, why Rama had to follow Sita's trail, not through knowledge, but through hearsay and other ordinary methods.... Moreover, it seems that gods themselves were putting obstacles in order that the whole Cosmic Drama could unfold step by step. [Silence] Well, that's about it.

Student: [Hesitantly] Guru, how about the victory?

Valentina: [Readily and brightly] Oh, indeed, indeed.... Rama is Victory. Orchestra, trumpets, drums, no violins, please! [Laughter) We shall conclude with Rama's victory, for Rama and victory are synonymous for all the worlds now and for the worlds to come. His Name is a symbol of invincibility. Your request is entirely correct!

When we think of the victory of Rama it is impossible to omit the Divine Monkey Hanuman, also known as Anjaneya, who was in the service of the Great Sugreeva, the son of the Sungod. It was an unusual Kingdom. It was populated by the monkeysbut these were gods in disguise very mighty, intelligent and superior in character. Hanuman was karmically connected with Rama and recognized Him, at the first sight, as Vishnu, the Supreme God.

Rama described ardently the incomparable signs of Sita so that Hanuman could recognize Her at once. Rama gave His ring to Hanuman as a proper introduction to Sita. He ended, "You are the only one fit to cross the ocean and carry this message of hope to my Queen." Hanuman was beside himself with inspiration and adoration. He performed many exploits. First he took a form of a giant to step across the ocean into the land of Asuras Lanka. But when he landed in Lanka he assumed a size of a tiniest creature, which gave him an opportunity to crawl into every possible corner of Ravana's Kingdom. He went through indescribable palaces, parks, harems, art collections, and every possible luxury one could imagine. He was looking for Sita but couldn't find Her. Suddenly he saw the woman who was so beautiful that he almost took her for Sita. Hanuman was very sad, for this woman was surrounded by immense luxury and many amusements of doubtful taste and he couldn't imagine Sita in such indulgences. He was shocked and almost decided to quit his search, but then thought he should investigate more. After close examination, he was relieved, for this beautiful woman was vulgar and stupid. Neither did she have certain outward characteristics which Rama had mentioned. Finally Hanuman found Sita in one of the most exquisite retreats of Ravana. But indeed she was a prisoner and not a courtesan! She was surrounded by monstrous grotesque Rakshasis who were scaring Her and torturing Her. She was very poorly clad and looked most exhausted. Ravana entered the forest and roared his passionate praises as well as threats, but Sita would cover Her ears and wouldn't listen. Hanuman's heart was weeping from sorrow as well as admiration for Sita. Ravana left in fury. Sita decided to end Her life and was about to hang Herself from the tree. Hanuman came to Her gently and stopped Her. He related the whole story and then identified himself through Rama's ring. Sita gave Hanuman Her last piece of jewelry as Her love message to Rama. Before his departure, Hanuman assumed a huge stature and destroyed many luxurious parts of Lanka. Ravana sent his son to capture the "monkey." Hanuman allowed it for his own purpose. He was brought to Ravana and eulogized Rama. Ravana padded his tail with oil and set it on fire, but instead of destroying Hanuman, he only gave him an opportunity to destroy his whole Kingdom. Jumping from roof to roof, Hanuman set on fire every corner of Lanka, leaving the tree under which sat Sita magically protected. Then he went to Rama and gave to Him a full account of his exploits.

Ravana was furious. He mobilized his forces. But prior to marching against Rama, Ravana had his council and there all his giant advisors, commanders and friends and subjects were giving him various advice. Everybody was eulogizing him and was indignant about what has happened. And yet they revealed a specific and rather profound sense of honour. Some of them said it is thoroughly wrong. It is beyond any conduct to capture a wife without fighting the husband. Yes, they had that sense of honour. And most of them

were, of course, concerned only about restoring the might and the power of Ravana. Except that brother, his younger brother who is called Vibishana, this one gave a piece of truth to Ravana. And interesting, he talked about it with great Ravana, you were like my father and like my Guru, but still I have to tell you respect to Ravana, for Ravana was a hero, a monster hero. He said, "Now the truth. And the truth is that your behaviour is scandalous. The truth is that you achieved all these miraculous powers through austerities and now you are losing them through indulgences." And of course Ravana was ready to just chew him to pieces. And he said, "It's below my dignity to fight a weaker brother. You better get out of here, but quickly, otherwise you'll be reduced to death." And he also said that, "I notice that you admire Rama and Lakshmana instead of admiring me. I notice tears in your eys when you are hearing the word Rama, the Name Rama. I noticed it when that horrible monkey was brought to me. And who rescued him, telling me that it's ignoble to destroy the [With the tone of despicable sarcasm of Ravana] Meessenger." So That was the only attempt to put Ravana on the proper road.

Ravana immediately decided to march, for there was no other way. He realized that his whole kingdom had been already practically ruined. And the most humiliating thing was that it was by the monkey. And the younger brother still had a chance to say, "Please don't think that it is the monkey; it is the gods!the gods and the God and Rama is God." But Ravana said, (in your American parlance) "Shut up!" [Laughter] So Ravana employed all his great supporters and giants, and Rama was with His devotees. And since Rama was not with His kingdom now, the gods asked Indra to send down a special chariot, which Rama can use with great advantage. And the chariot came down. And when Rama saw this, he thought that it's another trick of the Asuras. He couldn't believe His eyes. So He had to consult this time Lakshmana and Hanuman. They looked and looked expertly. And they said, "Ahha, this time it is real. You better accept it. It is absolutely not the false creation." And, I won't go into the real battle, for it is too scary.

But of course Rama won. In between there were many, many tricks of Ravana; he was a black magician par excellence. And he knew how to use the weapons which are completely invincible. One of his weapons was the socalled "Maya weapon" which would pro duce all kinds of illusions. It was a tough battle. Finally of course Rama won. [Silence....] Yes.... At last VishnuRama stood by the corpse of Ravana, looking at him with intense compassion and repeating: "Oh, what a great hero this terrible Asura is. What couldn't he accomplish with all his powers, if only he would be guided by Good and not Evil!"

Student: It sure requires Rama's nobility to make such a statement.

Valentina: Yessss. And when Vibishana prostrated to Rama in full surrender and adored Him, congratulating Rama with His Victory, Rama's only concern was: "But I see a deep scar on Ravana's backwhat is my victory if I attacked the man whose back was turned to me?" Vibishana reassured the Lord, explaining the origin of the scar due to some other escapades of the Demon. Rama was relieved! Where and who can have such valour, such generosity, such Divine Power and Divine Splendour?!

And Sitathis flower of womanhood, the tender princess of Rama's Heart?! I am always reluctant to talk about the unutterable and indescribable, and truly, whenever I have to (for it is the "have to"), I mentally apologize to the Ramayana. I feel that to speak about Ramayana is in a way to trespass against the gods. The same Is true about everything unrepeatable and sublimely perfect. The humblest and the best way is to qualify our recitation with such sincerity and ardour that...that It becomes the INVOCATION! And then.... miracles do happenyou will get some inspiration; you will become a poet or a seer by His Grace.... You can say a prayer to Hanumanthis incredible adoring devoteeHanuman is at your service the moment you utter Rama's Name....

Student: If it would be at all appropriate to say thank You for such "cosmic display," of Cosmic Play, I would say thank You. But it is not appropriate. What you have just.... sung is absolutely incredible. Truly, truly, it is not for the mortals but for gods!

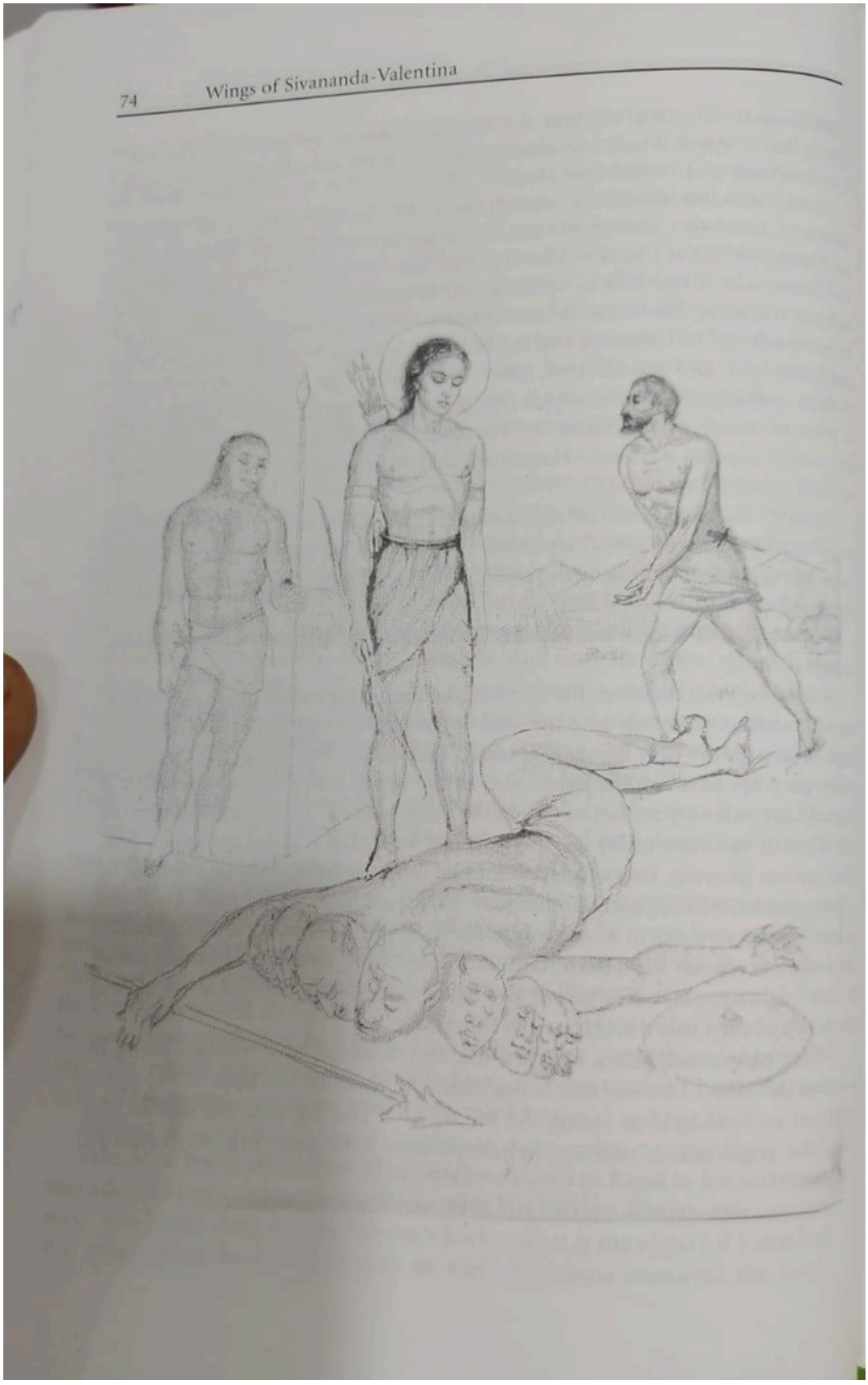
Second student: Maybe it is because You adore all the aspects of God, but adore,

really?

Valentina: Yes, I do adore the Spirit of the Lord with my whole Being, as well as with whatever the gods send my way! that is to say, with my outer entourage as well as with my Real Being. It is sacred and within, and my personalities are only the emphasis, just the expression of the inner. And every day we should expand the outer expression as well as the inner worship and inner awareness of the Lord. If you have today the way you had yesterday, you are not expanding, you are not growing. Every today should be different from yesterday, should be a little greater, a little purer. Do not look back ever, do not look back. Love and adore Rama every day in a new way. Only then you will not do it mechanically. You will not repeat "Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram" and know nothing

about it. You ought to put the new accent into it, the renewed, sparkling sweetness. And then.... and then you will attract His Vibration.

When people talk glibly, it is just like to talk about love without being in love, to describe a kiss without being kissed, to describe the taste of the apple without ever biting it or seeing the red of it.... The big talk, the intellectual talk, the yogic talk is nothing in comparison with four lettersR.A.M.A! [Silence]



MAY 6

The Birthday of Lord Buddha

May 25, 1975

Oh, the Blessed One! The austere and simple, the compassionate and the forbearing! Secret and silent was He, for He never talked about what He alone knew, yet the totally open to all! Buddhathe Lord of Highest Wisdom.

...I told you many times how He left His outer gloryall the fragrances and the elegance and the richesit was very simple for Him because He was directed by the Spirit. How He came across the ascetics almost immediately after leaving the luxuries; how they felt superior to Him and authoritatively taught Him the fundamentals of ethics and Dharma... But, being the Lord, He certainly quickly realized that all the neverending logomachies of the rigid moralists are indeed not answering the search for the Real...for the answer about the suffering and [Valentina's voice becomes lower and more intense] the how to get out of it...

...His next stepthe practice of asceticism instead of the much talk about it. He thought that even as the damp wood cannot give fire, even so, the unextinguished dark passions cannot be carried within if one wants freedom...But He only dilapidated His innocent body. He was several times on the verge of death...yet the answer didn't come, cannot come from mortification.

...And only through deep silence and profound meditations He did realize that the manifested Universe is of the Immutable Law, is a System of Law, which if violatedbrings the acutest sorrow. The greatest error is to take the illusions of ignorant mind for reality and to perpetuate the evil creations of the mind. That was revealed to Him as a most obvious fact.

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...It is absurd to call the Blessed Buddha "antidevotional," "dry," etc., only because He, with His uncompromising, clear mind would not ever accept the surrogates! [With elan, Her voice dynamic] "Bhakti? Bhakta? Fine! Then prove

[6]

See *"May 1975 with Sivananda-Valentina"*

itby your life. If there be no trace of illwill left in you, you can call yourself a Bhakta!" He indeed valued the true devotion. His tenderness to His dearest and nearest disciple Ananda proves His appreciation of Bhakti. [Pause]

An amusing dialogue between Buddha and His great disciple Sariputta... Sariputta said: "Such faith and admiration do I have to Thee, O Lord, that I am convinced there never was, never is and never shall be such an Enlightened One as Thou!"

To what the Lord remarked humourously: "I presume, 0 Sariputta, that you are well acquainted with all the Buddhas who were before Me, those of the past?"

[Hesitating] "Well...I can't say this."

"Ah...then perhaps you are aware of those of the future?"

[Short stutter] "No, my Lord, how can I?"

"Well then, no doubt you are well penetrating into my own very being and feel all the corners of my mind?"

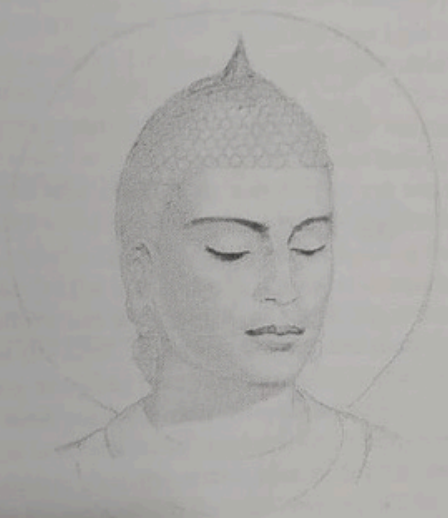
"Sorry, not even that!"

"Then why in the three worlds, such big words of big devotion to the Guru?! 0 Sariputta let us be more reserved."

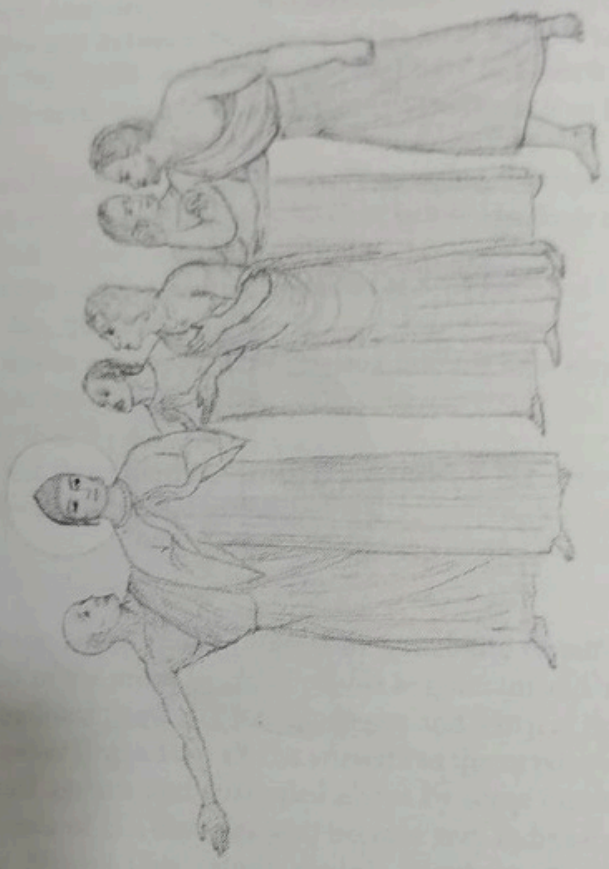
...There was Never anger or nervousness or irritability or selfdefense in Buddha; He thought of the most degraded people as ignorant and limited, not as dangerous or rebellious. How elegant, courteous and witty, at times ironic, even sarcastic, but never unkind are all His answers to the opposers.

When blasphemed against and gossipped about by some dunceBrahmin publicly in the presence of His disciples who became very indignant and were real provoked the Blessed One calmly smiled: "Brethren, if others speak badly about Me or My Doctrine or My Order, there is no reason why you should lose your temperl If you will lose control., you simply diminish the light within. Nay, you will lose the power to discriminate and to understand clearly, so.... be quiet and then you will know the how!"

Oh, the Blessed Buddha's... Rightness!



Buddha





Buddha's Teachings are based on the living ethics, on practical goodness. The good is to be done not for the purpose of some kind of a reward. You ought to be spotless and aright, because it is the only way, there is no other way. There is no such thing as a capricious punishment or reward, but one invites, through his actions, an inevitable retributionhence one should be "very cautious."

If you will not become purified and will not perform the good deeds, you have no chance to invoke Intelligence within yourself and to be liberated from Ignorance. So Caution is a practical Sadhana. It is for becoming fulfilled, for getting out of the wheel of birth and death and suffering. To say it simply,for becoming happy. Every one of you knows how unhappy he is because he is careless and is not mindful within. When you light the light within, you do not care for the darkness outside! Till then the "Right Caution!"which really is another name for the "Right Mindfulness."

...Everyone of you knows how difficult it is to be "very cautious." If one is overly careful, one is dry and rigid and most unconvincing, most boring personality, the person who is afraid to step over an ant and the person who is afraid to say an extra word and the person who is so laconical that it is really not too pleasing a sight! it is all from fear of acquiring the bad Karma. Not that kind of caution did the Lord preach. It was the intenseness and the awareness and the concentration upon what you are doing and on the background of the adoration of the Ideal. Then you are not accumulating the unnecessary Karmas and also are avoiding many embarrassing situations.

Student: Guru, what precisely constitutes the accumulation of "bad Karmas?"

Valentina: There is a "scientific" explanation, metaphysical explanation in Jainism and Buddhism, that the multitudes of human deeds and misdeeds accumulate in little Karmas which literally cover up the human soul, plaster it to such an extent that it becomes, as it were, material. The human soul became immersed in matter. It is dragged by the material entities, by the deeds of the man during his sojourn of endless incarnations. Separation from the Spirit became an impetus to sinful life. It takes away the human being from Intelligencefrom that Immortal Essence within, who is effulgent, luminous, pure. The little deeds, the Karmas, cover the Intelligence with the "sticky stuff."

Man creates Karmas every moment! Your body, your mind, your speech, your desires are constantly producing the endless Karmas. The main channel through which Karmas are

entering are the thought activities. Bad Karmas literally rush into the inner being through lack of control of mind, through passions, indiscrimination, doubt, infidelity, betrayal, injury of living beings, falsehood, anger, lust (in all its subtle and gross forms, including lust for things which one does not already possess!), theft, in general, all negative and ugly impulses. Student: Is there any may out of this seemingly evergoing mess?

Valentina: Until you "sattwinize" or purify your whole conduct (mental, physical and emotional) you cannot hope for this Intelligence to pierce through you; the "mess" continues and continues. The atrocious forces are pushing and pulling their way. Man commits, as if against his will, wrong deeds and then is ashamed. If he loses conscience he is not anymore ashamedhe just continues to do it because it becomes his nature, precisely because those pulling forces, those numerous Karmas, are not allowing the Soul to function.

Student: What do You recommend against the evil pulls?

Valentina: Silence! It is one of the greatest purifications! During Silence you have an opportunity to understand how unsilent you are, how many terrible habits you have. It is a matter, of course, of not only lifetime but lives to liberate yourself precisely from these little "evil pulls" as you call them, which form up a desire body which veils the Soul. The desire body has to be completely, completely annihilated! And therefore, there are so many disciplinesthe "don'ts" and the "do's" of all religions. The raison d'etre of all disciplines is the removal of evil Karmas, the cultivation of the good Karmas and, consequently, the transcendence of all Karmas. Start with Silence end with silent Enlightenment!

Second Student: May I ask, how do we cultivate the good Karmas?

Valentina: Good Karmas are created through good mental and psychological habits as well as aspirations. Forgiveness, modesty, forbearance, penance, wellwishing, charity, sacrifice, in short..."Whatsoever is lovelythink of that, O Brethren!"...And inspiration, meditation, ecstatic experience transcend even the lovely Karmas and make man enlightened and free.

We shall meditate tonight upon the two ways. Basically there are two ways, two paths: the High Way and the low way. The Eightfold Path of Buddha is the High Way which includes balance, measure; that which He calls the Middle Way is part of the Highest Way. That which man calls the middle way is the mediocre way, is the way of the low path, the low way. Since times immemorial man is divided into two very unequal groups. The majority seeks the low way and the very minutest minority takes the Cross and follows Himthe High Way!

Student: How does the man of the low way show himself?

Valentina: Many vulgarities! But one specific feature: the man of the low way is unreliable.

You can never trust him. The low way is a zigzag. It is a totally unreliable way.

The low life is an easy life yet a very complicated life. It is not a paradox when you think about it. The way of the world, or the very low way (well, how else can I call it?), is of the very dense vibrationvery dim! it is complicated, I told you, because it is a zigzag. There is never a straight line in it. Complicatedyes, but it is easy in that man does not think, does not control; he just follows his whims, follows his he calls it "natural" inclinations. He does not know what he wants and he does not want to know. He is extremely fluctuating. He might declare the High Way but he has no guts; he has no will and he has no aspiration. That is why the Lord Buddha says the RRRight Aspiration! Without that right aspiration you lose very quickly your resolve and your promise.

That is why I say you cannot rely even a little bit on the man of the low way. He will adore you today and he will betray you tomorrow. And here we had it just by hundreds! It is a small place and I do not accept many people, but still hundreds passed through my hands and they all were prostrating, but it is only for a moment, it is just a whim. And then they go, and not only from here, from everywhere. It is just gogogogogo, look around, look around and land nowhere! It is a human unregenerated nature. Here we are attempting to transcend this nature.

Student: It seems that this life of "gogogo" can lead only to frustration.

Valentina: Obviously!

Student:... And the why of it?

Valentina: The why of it is that you are all the time on the very bottom! You do not have the horizon at all; neither, of course, you have the way up, infinitely vertical above the horizon! And you do not have the high flight at all! Result? Suffering, great suffering) Whereas, when you are lifted up, aspiring, you are both, very noble and very quiet, the only things which interest you are the qualities acceptable to God. You are opening yourself to more wisdom, to more silence, to more nobility, to more character.

Student: How about the: higher life are we fit for it, or is it only a dream?

that which You call the "High. Way?"

Valentina: By no means it is a dream! It is a reality, but a reality which has to be fought for. The High Life is a simple life but a very difficult one. There is no zigzag there. Man of the High Way knows what he wants very well and goes straight upsimple! but extremely difficult in that he has to fight not only his own past... [Hesitates a moment] how would I call it? well, Sanscrit word "Samskaras" would describe it well. but he also has to fight the whole world. The High Way knows not compromise. That is why it is so difficult. The low way knows only compromise. There is no question even. The High Way is total giving of oneself. The low way is giving nothing but grabbing everything Student: Guru, how do we enter that High Way?

Valentina: You enter it with your wings! It is Highit requires a soaring movement. The High Way is an inspiration and a joy for those who are fed up of the low way. You cannot force yourself to climb, you have to have wings to ment of the wings in itself is the soaring. As a matter of fact, the whole life is soar. Just climbing alone will not take you high. The process of the develop.

nothing but perpetual transformation or evolution or change. The one who refuses to do it is indefinitely long treading the low way, the way of no effort, no Sadhana, no

transformation, no rejuvenation and no Salvation. Perpetually remaining in the low way is called Samsarathe wheel of birth and death.

The High Way is the way of life; it is expanding the life. First man exists, just like the animal and the plant; it is the physical life which dims and then is extinguished. When he takes the High Life, he expands his consciousness and his life becomes the Life Divine, which does not dim but shines!...Do not please think that it is a very easy thing to live the Life Divine. Those who talk glibly about it do not live it.

The Life Divine is a very secret life; it is just between you and God. It is gradual unfoldment, even like a bud into a flower. It is...ah, it is inviting the Divine Qualities within yourself; it is exposing yourself to them. It is coexisting with them. It is all the time waitingwhat will happen next? You are giving of yourself and you are invoking the Divine Peace, the Divine Wisdom, the Divine Knowledge, for it is your heritage. Therefore, the human erudition is even as "phhh"it is nothing! It is a cargo which the donkey is carrying not knowing what is costly and what is cheap. Whereas the Divine Knowledge is that which comes not from human memorization and looking around for various informations. It is like a breath which is breathed into you; it is an inspiration! It is an entirely different source; it is a direct communication and it comes only through silent life, secret life within.

...There is only one way the High Way. And that's it. Think about it. [Whispering) The High Way. It is a rarified air there! It is very clear. And one can breathe very, very beautifully there. Nothing suffocating, nothing puzzling. nothing zigzagging. And it really is very simple but very difficult, that I told you. To make it more understandable to you, use the sentence, the very phrase, the very wordHIGH Way, HIGH Life, HIGH Aspiration, HIGH. And do not think about anything else. Concentrate upon that tallness. You are going tall and highway up, way up, way up! You do not look right and left or down! No down! It is only up! And the more up, the bluer and the more silver and the more gold it is. There are no dense colours there.

And every time a thought comes in, you just go again up and repeat within yourself, "High up." Do not strain yourself but just love the height. Then you will invite the Heights into your high aspiration; then you will invite that which liquidates the low way, the base way, the scattered life, the noconcentration in your life, the gogogo every corner and everywhere. "Many are the thoughts of the irresolute, but there is only one thought in the

mind of the evolved being!" The one thought is, [Quietly, intensely] HIGH Way! So close your eyes and go High Way.

Om Sakti. [Silence]

JUNE

We are starting a very interesting month. Every year I call June the month of Transformation, and I do not think that I will rebaptize it. We will stick to that definition. But every year I hope it is more and more conscious and less and less theoretical.

Today, during the Silence, I was contemplating beautiful things and among them the bewilderment of Thomas à Kempis as regards men! He said men usually are interested in another man only outwardly. Everyone asks, "How old is he?" Or "Can he sing well?" Or "What is his occupation? Is he handsome? Is he skillful?" and many other such things. But how many people would ask, "Is this man practicing the principles of virtue and to what degree?" Well, it is so true. Thomas à Kempis is one of my great friends!

In order to transform the outer personality, to make it an obedient tool of the inner being, it is indeed profitable to ponder upon the words of this Saint.

How many of you care to cultivate your own principles and virtues?! Never mind another man whom you judge usually only outwardly. How many of you are interested to what degree you are practicing that which has been given to you here, for instance? And look, we are almost in half of the year. The new year is usually full of hopes and enthusiasms and then it gradually fades away.

It should not....

Student: Guru, it is very embarrassing that we can remain inspired for so short a time. How can we obtain that permanent enthusiasm for transformation?

Valentina: There are so many approaches to it. Actually everyone at least unconsciously wants to "transform" himselfin the sense of bettering himself. Any betterment leads to happiness! And who wants to be unhappy?! Man wants to change the circumstances; he wants to transform them into something more pleasant and happy. Well, this is an instinctive urge; animal also does this, and it is a wonderful impulse. But lasting, harmonious transformation starts only when you, yourself, put all your mind and your will

and your spirit into that endeavour, when you know that it has to be done because it is the Will of God, because God wants man to become divine.

Student: I noticed how people are so interested in the body culture. Does this culture have anything to do with transformation?

Valentina: As a stepping stone, it does. But let us understand that mostly man wants to transform only his physical body and his material life. This is the consciousness of majority. An average person functions only in his physical brain and in his physical body. Well, transformation for such consciousness usually is hoped to be achieved through physical means mostly. For instance, exercise, taking vitamins, making your diet better, visiting the. doctors, going through some kind of physical therapy, joining various sportsOlympics, for example, if your body is fit for itin other words, man is ever ready for the physical culture with the hope of transformation of the body, making it stronger, healthier, longerlasting. Well, of course this is good, but very limited; you must admit it. Yet, as a part of integral culture, it is praiseworthy. Without other cultures, it is useless, for the physical culture only improves the tenure of your body, makes it a better instrument, making your life more bear able and pleasant, but leaves you as ignorant.
Student: Is there any greater merit in the intellectual selfbetterment, then?

Valentina: This is obviously a weightier ingredient of general selfculture, but still an ingredient. Intellectuals (professors, philosophers, ethical leaders) think of transformation along more subtle lines; you may attribute a greater merit to them! They offer various doctrines and they try to go accordingly, expanding their mental life endless speculations, debates, opinions, hypotheses, and so forth. This is mental culture and it is a most essential part of human achievement. Interesting, but does it transform you? No. At best it is only a talk about transformation.

Student: Valentina, what precisely, is the transformation? What kind of transformation are You stressing?

Valentina: Definitely the transformation which is prompted by Spirit. And here we can notice a very significant fact, that those very few luminaries of humanity who gave us the Eternal Precepts include into their testaments the transformation of all parts the physical, the mental, the vital, the emotional, everything! Because the Spirit is everything. Whereas all those other parts in you, without the supervision of the Spirit,

work in a limited way, very partially and impermanently. They are depending on circumstances, on capacities, and are arrested or hindered by many incapacities. They require a lot of human effort, and human effort, unless used on the background of the divinized will, is most unreliable. But if we will take the way towards transformation advocated by the spiritual giant, we will see that it is thrilling, it is inspiring, fulfilling, too.

Ican't but bow again and again to the Lord of the Bhagavad Gita who so majestically pointed this fact: "The fools of this world know Me not, when they see Me in the human body. They do not know My Infinite Spirit, the Master of all! Their hopes are in vain, their learning (all your physical and mental cultures!) are in vain! They fall down to the nature of the demons, totally deluded.

But there are some purified souls who know Me, their refuge is My own Divine Nature. They love Me with concentrated mind. They praise Me with adoration. They praise Me for ever and ever." Well...they are transformed.

Moses said, "I Am That I Am." That is transformation! He starts with the Essence; he is That. He is! That is what God told him and through him. "] Am" that is to say, the Divine Consciousness am I all inclusive! It is confirmed by the Upanishads: "Tat Twam Asi." Or Christ: "I am come to give you life and to give it more abundantly," which means that your present life is incomplete and He (the Christ Spirit) increases every function of your life, making it more, more abundantly fulfilled. And again, Krishna: "I am Brahman within this body, Life Eternal which perishes not!" Well, when you have That, you have your physical culture, you have your mental culture, you have your vital culture as secondary endeavours.

How do we discover That?! By giving ourselves to It and opening ourselves to It day after day, weekend after weekend. Every day should find you a bigger man if you are consciously striving! If, if, if!. Until and unless you start to adore the Lifegivers, the Wisdomgivers, you will not discover within yourself the very same, and your other cultures and disciplines will not be much! And what is certain, you will aggrandize them, attributing to them the first place. The results are rather crippling. Just think of our material science which factually was born less than two hundred years ago and progressed enormouslybut strangely no scientific discoveries have improved the conditions of human life, nay, we see far more strife and agony! It would be ridiculous to blame science which is wonderful in itself, but useless if divorced from the Supreme Scientist God the Almighty.

Student: Is it possible that some, by their nature, are not fit for transformation? I feel rather "beat" and down.

Valentina: Don't! Cheer up! What a man is, he is, he is, he is. But he is not doomed! He can transform himself, he can change! Regardless what type your nature is, you can reach salvation being yourself and not somebody else. It all depends how pure you are, how pure is your heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." No one else will! You can be thousand times a genius but if your heart is not pure, you shall not see God! So it means that it is not so much your status and your position in life, even your capabilities and your great capacities, which will give you liberation, but it is how pure you are! Transformation is not to jump into somebody's position (that is not transformation, this is arrogance! [Smiling]), but it is to purify yourself where you are. And then, consequently, you expand your capacity, and your status becomes different also. You become of a different class, a person of a different quality.

Student: That gives hope, thank You, indeed.

Second student: It is interesting that integral development can improve our position in society, create a new, better class of society.

Valentina: You misconceived! Not for one second I meant social promotion. By "class" I meant "quality;" I meant this word "class" figuratively. It is not social promotion which should interest you. It is not that you should outdo the other man or compete with him or envy him or aim for leadership. It is not that. It is just that you have to make yourself the best you! If at all to competeit is to compete with yourself. When you start with the inner selfbettermentChrist Jesus told it to you, I do not have to say it. He says, "...then the rest will be given unto you." But when you start with the "rest," you are making yourself a squirrel which is running in the same wheel all its life and gets nowhere.

Student: But Valentina, is it not the nature of life to compete and through this, better oneself?

Valentina: Competition is a rather brutal means for selfbetterment. Obviously everybody wants to better himself unless he is totally lazy and inert. If you are a Tamasic personality, you seldom want to better yourself. But everyone who is Rajasic wants to "better himself."

In the terminology accessible to everybody if you are a dynamic personality, a "gogetter," you want selfbetterment, you want to better yourself through competition, through jumping over the heads of others the motive of such selfbetterment is rather dirty. It is selfpromotion for position, prestige, authority. And it is a competitive drive only. It is...I just quoted the Bhagavad Gita and you, of course, forgot...it is for the "fools of this world".... It is a greed, my Children. It is a greed to better yourself, to eat the best food, to buy the best clothes, to get the best furniture; it is a "show off;" it is a greed for becoming No.1!

In other words, it is "go and get" in the form of selfbetterment as a merchandise; There is merchandise...and there is value for value's sake, don't you see? The "best you" is never for sale, never for competition, never for "go and get" but always to be, to be, to be that which is acceptable to the Devas. If they will look downstairs, they will smile at you if you are the best you. If they look at you when you are "going and getting" for the purpose of outdoing the world, they will stop smiling at you.

So you, the group which is striving for selfbetterment, have to evaluate your selfbetterment and find out of what category it is. It is a human nature to compete, to acquire, to surpass. We all have that, but we have to pinpoint these things, to call them by their names, and to give a kick to them. Out should they go!

Student: What then should go in?!

Valentina: The Best You, which is not for sale. The "best you" is not nec essarily the "successful you"successful in terms of the world. The best you is the pure you, the pure you in your essence and your colours, in your capacity, in your ingredients. This is the best you. It is not to sit down on somebody's chair; it is to sit on your own chair which fits you best. Just like three little bears! [In the high pitch voice of a delighted child] Juuuuuuuuust right!

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Student: Guru, what role do the gunas play in our transformation?

Valentina: It would be more correct to ask, "What role does man play in the transformation of his gunas!" You at will can transform the forces you can transform the whole being.

Student: But Christ said: "on my own I can do nothing" and You often quote Him. How then can we transform the elemental forces?

Valentina: It is so clear and yet people constantly are confused about the role of selfeffort visàvis the Grace!

Don't you understand that the Divine never forces Itself on man?! You have to try yourself and then you can say, "on my own I can do nothing." First comes your ardour to start transforming the evil elements within you. Then comes the Grace in the form of more energy in you to continue your work. Your will becomes united with the High Will and you begin to realize that "on your own" you never could do the job! Always think of the Greatest, the Buddha, who did not spare Himself in search of Truth; the Christ, Jesus; Ramakrishna! They all were seeking and knocking in spite of being the Avataras! The human will has to seek and test and search and make every possible effort. The Answer is given in proportion to the question!

The faroffgods do not come so easily to dissolve your Tamas and Rajas! Plead, pray, watch, work, and do it in total secrecy. You will receive the illumination which obviously is the descent of the Higher Force. But it is you who invoke and make things possible.

Student: Thank You for Your words, Guru. I was wondering how to deal with the gunas?

Valentina: It is most fascinating and interesting to observe yourself and to learn which guna predominates! Every one of you knows that you have certain vices or certain inclinations, and it is essential to understand them, to understand them almost scientifically, yogically, occultly. Now, for instance, if someone is obstinate and stubborn, it is Tamo guna. One can be educated in university and yet be very stubborn and very unbending, inflexible, fanatic or whatever. All this is from Tamas. When man is overly talkative and overly busy and is interested too much in other people and cannot hold his impulse of talking and acting, it is Rajas predominatingit predominates to such an extent

that it is very difficult to control the tongue, the sex, the competitive impulse, etc. So your "role" is to develop some awareness of this play of forces.

When you are acting in a base manner, in an uncontrolled manner, in a restless manner, in an overly ambitious manner, it is Rajas overpowered by Tamas, not even RajoTamasic guna but rather TamoRajasic guna playing in you. And when Rajas is coloured by Tamasic elements, they both are together in darkness and base activities. When TamoRajasic man is acting, his actions are tinted by dullness of Tamas, by ignoble attitudes of Tamas.

Student: I know the Rajas and Tamas pretty well, but the pure force seldom operates! When am I Sattwic?

Valentina: First heighten your Rajas! When your Rajas is influenced by Sattwa, your actions are dynamic and handsome. When Sattwa predominates, the actions are pure and withdrawn. The actions are from inside and then Sattwa is using the Rajas, not Rajas borrowing a little of Sattwa.

The transformation, speaking precisely, can occur only when you are developing the high unmixed Sattwic guna, the force of harmony, nobility, poise, purity, loveliness.... The final transformation transcends even this quality. In other words, a serious aspirant aims at the transcendence of the Sattwic guna as the culmination. The Sattwic guna leads to no guna or to purely spiritual consciousness. This is very, very high.

Also it is interesting that every one of you (and why "of you"everyone in human race) can evolve and can develop his Sattwic element and consequently can transcend even that Sattwic element only if he is true to himself. In other words, you are listening to the very high topics and many of you have frustration, many of you want to outspeed yourself, as it were. It means that you are not true to yourself and it means that you are hindering your progress instead of accelerating it.

Student: But I remember You did say that we are to "compete with ourselves" yet You say we should not outspeed ourselves.

Valentina: I can see it is dangerous to speak in figures. You take it literally! Don't you understand?! To "compete" with yourself instead of with others! This means to raise your quality by doing, thinking, feeling the best you can. It does not mean to try to do what at the moment is out of your reach. But whatever you are able to dodo well.... In this month let us try to consciously control the three gunas and to apply the techniques which are most favorable for the transformation of the egoity.

Student: I feel lazy and tired to make such paramount effort. Can I ever hope to transform myself?

Valentina: If under parrest. Play a little. But understand clearly that if you are lazy and dense, you cannot take to higher life; you cannot transform your self; you are glued to darkness by Tamas. And if you are full of outgoing tendencies too much curiosity, restlessness, if all your energies are spent on outer observations about people and events, too much ambition with all its modificationsyou are full of Rajas and cannot advance in inner life. You can progress only when your mind tends towards virtue for virtue's sake, when you don't scheme, speculate, expect rewards or analyze pros and cons, but when you simply are drawn to ponder upon the lofty and right values. Then your mind is Sattwic and it is only through such mind that you can transform your whole life. To put it very precisely: you start your transformation when all your parts are in harmony with each other, and you are transformed to some degree when there are no conflicts within you. "Some degree," because the Way of Perfection is infinite!

Student: How can we increase Sattwa?

Valentina: Your first step is to overcome the Tamasic, stubbornly uncooperative lower mind, which persists in its dark preferences; it knows only how to either indulge or despair.

Student: But how to stop despondency?

Valentina: By wanting to be happy and healthy, I suppose! After all, you don't want to perpetually indulge in stupor, do you? Effort, my Children, more effort. Student:

And then?

Valentina: Second step is to understand your Rajasic tendencies and curb them. The good dynamism is conducive to Enlightenment; the restless ambition with all that goes with it is ruinous. The purified Rajas desires (for desire is its nature!) progress; the unpurified desires competition and power.

Student: Well, the two steps are hard enough is there a third one?!

Valentina: The third step is to scrutinize even the Sattwic tendencies! For instance, there can be various good Sattwic habits (ritual, prayer, study) to which the aspirant clings and is not able to understand that there is time to expand, to enlarge, to refine even the best habits and not to degenerate into smug selfpraise, for instance! To cling to even the good ways is to postpone the true expansion and the freedom. One can become too attached to his Sattwic preferences also. One can become a "third rate Sattwic man," a "Kindy, the Lamb." Thusvigilance!

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The whole universe, manifested and unmanifested, consists of the play of forces. The whole Cosmos is based on the struggle, strife and battle of the Light with the darkness. And there are not necessarily only the forces rigidly divided into the dark and the light, but there are many "inbetweeners" and that is where people live all the time. It is neither hot nor it is cold. It is not even warmit is lukewarm, which attracts the lukewarm forces. We attract precisely that kind of a force which we ourselves are.

Student: One of the most difficult things is to see the forces actually working. We collapse or react to the worldly situation poorly or make faux pas, but only in retrospect do we intellectually attribute it to certain forces. We say, "Yes, it was the forces." But we do not actually know what forces are.

Valentina: It is nothing then! Just opinions and tall talk about forces! But when one heightens his consciousness, one then lives in the forces, one feels the whole world as the forces. One then thinks and feels in those terms and not în terms of events, acts,

personalities, etc. Well, when one lives so spontaneously, then only one can say that he operates in the forces, with the forces, through the forces, by the forces. And at times it is very, very painful, for you acutely experience the hostile forces. At times it is thrilling.

Student: I'm not sure. How does one develop this capacity?

Valentina: It is not "capacity"; it is experience. It comes, my Child; it overwhelms. You simply experience it! You experience it with your own skin; you just feel the force with your pores. You close your eyes and you know that you are approached by the force of the man who is such, such and such. Distance, by the way, plays no role. You do not have to analyze; you do not have to talk with man to know how he stands visàvis you. It is like a cloud, like a rain. When I open the letter I know exactly who is who. When I just sit down I feel from my right side, I feel something like a wave or like a breeze or like a heavy, heavy cloud. Well, this is the force. Unless you have such feeling, you cannot attribute things to forces. It is your opinion about forces; it is your guesswork about them; it is your estimation and it is your rationalization and analogy.

The very concept "force" contradicts "opinions." Student: That's incredible! It is poetry and yet You experience it.

Valentina: Plenty of prose too. I tell you, it is painful very often.

Student: How do You feel the forces?

Valentina: As if in music, in rhythm, in certain tempo!

Student: I'm not sure what You mean here.

Valentina: Well, for instance, this moment while we are talking, your force visàvis my force acts as a subdued force. Don't you feel that I project velocity which you do not support?!

Student: Yes, You are vigourous, quick and sparkling and I am sort of dull, yet 1 think I understand You.

Valentina: Well, you said it! I do not doubt for a moment that you appreci ate everything I say and that you understand it very, very well, but the force...(we are talking now in terms of forces and not in terms of mental capacities), so, the force is just like in music; we may compare it to one tempo and then to another tempo! There is Andante, there is Andante Morendo, or perhaps Moderato, there is Allegretto, there is Allegro, there is Molto Allegro, there is Vivace, and all are different tempos, you see? Now, for instance, at the moment I am Vivace, whereas you, indeed, are Andante Morendo! [Laughter] I have to slow down so that you might catch me! Tempo is one of the manifestations of the Force.

Student: But I am a little puzzled about one thing. Suppose I know at a moment when speaking to You that I am in fact being...inadequate, really not at all up to You.

Valentina: Under par, somewhat flabby and...yes?

Student: Would I be in any way able to adjust and improve my response at all?

Valentina: No, you would not be able to, because your force is not up to it. 1 can subdue my force but you cannot increase yours. It is a different velocity. It is always like that in everything. But there should be the corner in your consciousness which observes the force. And then you are okay; you observe the force. In other words, if you are able to say, "I see that I am simply pooped mentally or emotionally or vitally but I know that it is the temporary state of consciousness, that it is the inferior level which I intend to surpass," then it is okay.

Every one of us can be in the state of temporary descending. That is natural, because the forces diminish and they increase due to prana, due to the predominance of guns, etc. But when there is no permanency in our consciousness, we identify ourselves with the temporary condition. And then the funny thing happens we do not see it ourselves unless pointed out. Now, when the two forces, my Child, correspond or complement each other, then comes...then springs up a very delightful flower...very interesting and fascinating in its perfection. Student: I envy such fortunate ones! Must be like great mutuality?

Valentina: Yes.... Like perfectly performed music.

Second student: Guru, it seems all my failures come because of the sick emotional life! How to escape from this bondage?

Valentina: Oh, you pin me in the corner. Just to expect a magic pill is certainly not the right attitude! It is a very delicate area. In order to understand our good and bad emotions, we ought to first understand the validity of neg ative and positive, of good and bad tendencies in other areas. Now, for instance, it is obvious that man's very life depends sometimes on instinctive evaluation of the situation. Whatever is pleasant, whatever is wholesome is conducive to life. Whatever is unpleasant is not conducive to life in terms of. for example, bad smell, bad taste, uncleanliness and all such things. Man instinctively selects that which is conducive to his survival. What is obviously unfresh in food, a healthy man will not eat because he has that discriminative, instinctive feeling about it. The animal has it even more. Many men lost their instinct, and eat and drink almost poisonous things. Indeed it is a pity, for the instinctive functionings are most valid if one has them.

Now let us take purely human functioning the maximum of human functioning which an animal does not havel refer to reason. Here man can tell what is bad and what is good through rational discrimination; man can decide to take the good turn and to diminish the bad effect, for instance. Man, not every man, but man at his higher development can very well evaluate and say that this situation is good and this is bad. When man is underdeveloped mentally, he does not see the difference between good and bad. Then comes neurosis, abnormality, sometimes even insanity, sometimes crime. Thus, the negative instinctive as well as negative reasoning faculties are valid.

But now let's turn to the useless function in man's consciousnessthe emotional indulgences! The negative emotion is entirely harmful, useless and is taboo in spiritual life. It should be controlled and should be thrown out. Again I stress that in the instinctive life the negative feeling is useful; if you smell something bad, you will know that it is bad and that you should not touch it. In intellectual life, the negative evaluation is also very useful. You know what is falsehood; you know that here comes a cheat; you know the ignoble and you do not subscribe to it. But in the emotional life, the negative emotion is of no use, is a drag, a devitalizer.

Student: What is the difference between a negative emotion and, say, feeling negatively about something which is also used for a positive evaluation, as in the case of, say, a negative thought?

Valentina: [Slightly annoyed) Dostoevsky once said: "With an intelligent man it is a pleasure to converse"...do you get a hint?!

Student: Means I am on the reverse avenue?

Valentina: To put it softly, I detest long conversations, debates, big words and unclear statements. Please listen to the summary of already too long a chewing gum:

Fact one! Instincts are useful, both positive and negative.

Fact two! Reasoning is useful as both the positive and the negative evaluation. (I said reasoning and you stress thoughts! Random thoughts which support negative emotions are no thoughts; they are fleas!)

Fact three! But...feelings which contradict the rational approach are poisonous; they are hysterical, useless, destructive.

Student: Ah yes, Guru. What I was doingI see what my error was. A nega. tive emotion is an indulgence....

Valentina:...Is a deluxe problem, is a poison. How many capable, worthy people are making their lives miserable, you know it very well, because they are so identified with their negative emotions that they cannot live without them; they sometimes are even idealizing them. They say, "Well, I have a righteous indignation!" [Valentina raises Her arms questioningly) which is just to burn in fury and anger. Or, "Well, how can I stand it? I just hate my opposers, they are all false." All right. You hate your opposers and you hate your liver also and your heart and many other things.

The most popular and somehow pathologically cherished negative emotion is that of hurt feelings. People just are spending nights and days in bitter tears because they feel that

they are hurt, underappreciated, not admired, not received, etc. If they would use the better part of themselves the discriminative faculty, the good human judgement, the intellect, the reasonthey would see very clearly how foolishly they behave! But they do not have that faculty, that is the point. They are unintelligent. If they would for a change (by some miracle!) become a little bit less silly, they would understand how useless, how idiotic are those tears. What for?! Just wastage of time. And there are many, many other instances where man shows himself so uncontrolled, when the precious life is so wasted that it is most lamentable. Really!

Student: But surely there are situations when even the wise man sheds tears...

Valentina: Granted! Certain wounds bleed. Certain injustices are even as a bullet. But the wise man heals his wound, whereas the fool picks on it and digs it and infects it. [Silence]

So the first step is to not allow even a single negative emotion; this is twentyfour hour job. This is so difficult that words cannot describe it, because negative emotions are very suggestive and very powerful; they come from others and are also in our own subconscious mind. But it only shows that which I am often telling you that there are not many candidates to spiritual life or Yoga.

Very few, very few know, at least understand intellectually, that the Path requires giving up of negative emotion. If we do not start it like that, then we cannot enter the Path. If we, for instance, pretend that we are meditating and yet we are all the time cherishing some negative idea, we cannot meditate, because meditation is absolute positivity. It is opening yourselves to the Divine Force which you cannot do if your emotional life is not controlled.

Student: What about the positive emotions?

Valentina: Spiritually speaking, not only the negative emotions have to go at once and forever, but even your positive ones have to be vigilantly watched..... I will tell you rarely emotion is high and beautiful or pure and ardent.

Student: Guru, how about affection? How about wonderful feelings of all kinds? There are many such good emotions.

Valentina: There are not many real beautiful emotionstake my word for itl If there is something beautiful, it is lasting, real, reliable. But your "good" emotions are very quickly changing from good to bad and from bad to good; hence, they are imaginaries and nonsense.

Student: I'm not clear what Guru means by "imaginaries."

Valentina: Well, here is an example for you, the wrong enthusiasm, for instance! The TamoRajasic enthusiast will gladly sacrifice his pleasures (if he believes that the gods will pay him a big recognition and will give a first prize to him!), but he never in all the three worlds will consider it right to give up his pride which he calls dignity, his fears which he calls caution, his attachment which he calls love, his passions which he calls enthusiasm, his morbidity which he calls sensitivity, his lamentationsoh, especially this! which he calls by many names and which he almost worships! Just think about this paradox, this emotional sickness, this life of selfdeception. Don't you think it is very uncomfortable to live with the "imaginaries?!" Call things by false names?!

If what you call a "positive emotion" can be of some use (although rarely!), your negative emotions are of no value whatsoever. But man does not want to separate with them; he cannot and he does not want to.

Student: Guru, I really don't understand. What about all the emotions which have been expressed in the arts,? Do they not reveal all human emotions which You call "nonvalid?"

Valentina: Indeed! Take novels, even some of the best ones, take the operas, take the great stage, and you will see that the negative emotions are eulogized! Man is brought up on negative emotions, decorating them, calling them by false names and not wanting to separate with them. Now in spiritual life you have to throw them out. You have to disinfect yourself from them. In the eyes of the world you may look dispassionate and cold, whereas you are not. You are controlled; you are developing the Divine Samata!

Now does it mean that our romantic arts are of no value, spiritually speaking? Here I have to think much...but very quickly. [Laughter]... Well, spiritually speaking, they are of no use...some of them, anyhow.

The other day I was listening to absolutely incredible voice of the highest calibre singer. I was struck by the measure, by the indescribable range, both vocal and artistic. And then when I pondered upon the contents of the aria, of that extra ultra eulogy of the most negative human feelings from "La Traviata," which I know by heart, loved its artistic excellence and was much partaking of this musicballetizing and whatnotI do realize how this particular music and especially the story, intoxicates the most negative emotions and is projecting in human consciousness many, many negative attitudes, most decoratively presented. I know what I talk about, believe me.

And now I listened to parts from "Manon Lescaut," the story of the woman who is extremely emotionally unbalancedwhat we call today a dope addict, probably. [Laughter] She was not taking dope, yet she was doped! [Smiling) You know that state of mind, don't you, when one feels himself emotionally aroused, attractive, full of juices and in great need of adventure, sex, dangerous situations sometimes, risks and all kinds of that sort. Now, it is a handsome opera as far as its presentation is concerned, but there is precisely the danger. ous eulogy of the most useless emotions which we were latterly discussing. And opera supports it; drama supports it; literature supports it; certain type of music supports it. It goes so since times immemorial.

It would be helpful if these useless emotions were presented psychologicallycorrectly, truthfully, like, for instance, Dostoevsky's masterful depictions of human psyche. Romantic arts very seldom do it. And as to the cinemait is totally maudlin, really, embarrassingly so.

Student: How about that gal, Manonyou started to tell us?!

Valentina: Well, the woman who had lovers was sort of not sure where she belonged. She encouraged gambling and cheating and made her lover do very wrong things. She finally was arrested by police and was put to prison as a woman of small virtue. And the lover comes to prison and she very handsomely, operatically, falls into his arms and then dies. Before she collapses she says, "C'est ca, l'histoire de Manon Lescaut!" Very, very effective, is it not?! "

That's it the history of Manon Lescaut."

Student: What makes these arts so emotionally unhealthy?

Valentina: When aesthetics become an intoxicant, naturally you become drunk; when you become drunk you lose your reasoning power; when you lose your reasoning power you become stupefied; when you become stupefied that is the end of you, you perish! to somewhat paraphrase the Gita!

Almost everything in art can become poisonous for an intoxicated fool, for to such a one, art often suggests nothing but a romance...at times there is a little variation; a restless mind wound up by exciting music rushes to Monte Carlo, or the American adventurist to Las Vegas or the Californian mountains. To put it bluntly, it all culminates either in novelistic nonsense or in restless rambling, or at other times in crude and rude outbursts of sex, dope and alcohol.... [Silence]

Student: But Guru, surely the great men, the talented artists, etc., are not intoxicated, are they?

Valentina: Of course they are! More than the average man, for their vital is more developed, yet just as unpurified. The strong of this world very seldom turn to Truth! It is amazing how the strong of this lifestrong in talent, strong in handsomeness, strong in prosperity, strong in leadershiphow all these people would rather squander their strength and the immense gifts they receive from God on selfglorification!

The man of the "low way" can be very talented as some of the asurasbut they are crawling. They have no wings. Not all asuras are talented, but I mean their "cream society!" "Tops!" Well now, supposing the talented asurahe never goes up, he is crawling like a cockroach very quickly, from one side to anothergathering, picking, demanding and stealing. Well, supposing he is extremely talented (supposing!) and he subscribes to all kinds of "hifi." Now what happens? He has no peace and he has no purity and he has no aspiration; he has only competition, fear, frustration and curiosity. They are extremely nosey and curious. They just want to know not only what every other asura is doing but also what every deva is up to! [Pause]

Everywhere and I have told you that in art this is particularly obvious,they are drunk with their glory and they want more! Probably that explains why it is such a dull atmosphere in most of the churches! Because, alas, only the dull go to church! [Laughter]

...The whole show is the asuric game. Some of the men whom you consider the brilliant and the high are only the asuras, and so is their "society."

Student: If the asuras are not always ugly and stupidYou said they sometimes are attractivethen why are they so repulsive?

Valentina: Because they are rotten to the core, because their motto is selfish desire. Asuras are reflected by our "society"some ugly, some handsome and talented, but indeed, all are only the asuras. Our "society" has no "lower and higher" parts; it is all BOTTOM. Only exceptional individuals are antiasuras. Asuras can be artists and preachers! I think it was Shakespeare who first said that the Devil can quote Scriptures very adequately!

Student: Wait, wait a minute! How about big cultural places?!

Valentina: Your big places are their favourite playgrounds. They are in charge of entertainments, ballet companies, cinemas, etc., etc. They creep into schools, amidst the board of directors, politicseverrywhereand particularly when there are big talents. They just want to reign; they want this little tasty morsel of earth. It is tasty. There are some very gifted, great people on earth! To corrupt them is a challenge. Everybody almostthere are very few exceptionswho is talented and strong is in the intoxication of "run and get." Very seldom it is "stop and think...and give." And those who are weak are helpless. Now, all this is very dismal [Silence]

And now I shall touch the people who are neither intoxicated by alcohol nor by the novelistic idiocy, etc. There are some who are lifted up by the beauty, permeated by the beauty, expressed by the beauty, are the beauty! Please tell me what is the next thing after all that...beauty?! The next thing is to sit down and weep. Because it completely burns them out. It gives noth. ing...it gives nothing! It makes nothing; it takes nothing; it takes

nowhere; it is a fake. It is only a dream, and besides.... it is such a strong cult of selfadorationit is Narcissism!

Student: Valentina, please, I don't mean to be offensive, but why do You use so much music and arts; You are so obviously aesthetic and so good to look at!

Valentina: Because knowing (not reading!), really knowing the what I just told you that you are a bankrupt when you worship Beauty for the sake of beauty and yourself. I was graced by gods to love Beauty for, first, their sake (the gods!) and then, and now, for God's sake. Yeess.... Beauty in all its aspects becomes a veritable worship, a purifier, an inspirer only when I am able to dedicate it to the Supreme as the ardent love offering, as a sacrifice.... [Silence]

...In the realm of spirit, perception of Beauty is also spiritual. It is not sensually erotic, neither is it enchantingly intellectual, it is spiritually pure.

Student: Concretely, how?

Valentina: By not claiming anything at all, by knowing that everything is given by the Divine and should be offered back to the Divine. If one can really live like that, one's cult of beauty is divinized. It is neither alluring nor corrupting. It is giving of whatever one perceives as worthwhile giving, be it poetry, music, jewels or smiles! One who loves, adores and creates Beauty in its purest and heightened essence and is free from greed for it, is able to give it in prayer, in meditation, in word, in deed, in thought, in art and in the evaluation of art and beauty...please understand, the evaluation too becomes different.... [Pause]

Student: It is difficult to switch to questions after Your...song, yes, song!

Valentina: [Quietly] Go ahead.

Student: In what sense does Guru mean "different evaluation?"

Valentina: Well, let us evaluate that little charming tune of SaintSaens which we were just listening to [The Swan). Note! I said charming tune instead of saying "that great music!" Part of evaluation is precision and truth. Here perhaps a little word about SaintSaens in general and this little piece in particular.

SaintSaens has a reputation of one of the greatest masters of music and yet is not recognized by the highbrows as the "giant musician" because they claim that he is not "original enough." I cannot but smile at such lack of generosity. SaintSaens is the best SaintSaens. Just as the good grade carnation can be the best carnation and you cannot blame it because it is not the rose.... And that says it all. That is why it is equally possible to take his tiny melodies which I often introduce here as the background for our movements as well as his more sophisticated and grand compositions. So that is how your evaluation is changed! Through spiritual approach you feel the real values and do not care for big talk or sophistry; you feel the forces of validity.

And back to the evaluation of that music depicting "The Swan," to that "charming tune" shall we call it emotional? Shall we call it artistic? Yes, it is both. But it is purified emotion and purified artistry. It is crystal pure, it is depictive, it reveals much simplicity and spontaneity. It is innocent, it is true; hence, you would agree, it is indeed offerable to the Divine!

Generally speaking, the great romantic art is only then truly great when it has in its essence and background a noble classical tradition. Then it is pure, measured and...offerable to God! Whenever an artist, or for that matter, any emotional person, is carried away by his emotions, either in his art or in his life, it becomes...not offerable to God! To whom is that excessive emotionalism offered?

Whom does it praise and what does it fume? It is offered to his majesty the ego which aggrandizes itself in screams of frustration.... [Silence]

Student: When is the emotion truly useful?

Valentina: When emotion becomes a high and purified "motion," then it is no more in the category of the objectionable. Student: But is there strict criterion for the "objectionable" and "non-objectionable?"

Valentina: There is no criterion for the logically functioning mind, but there is an instantaneous, unmistakable evaluation for the heightened intuition. Art which emanates transparent purity immediately lifts up the hearts. But here again, whose hearts? The hearts of the truly receptive, highly artistic, devoted and dedicated.... I leave it to you, I won't dissect it further.

Student: Guru, thank You for this extremely poetic and enlightening discourse. It just seems so clear now that only when man offers his "pearls" to God is he free.

Valentina: Seems so! That is to my way of thinking the most graceful way of conquering the onrush of emotions, and transcending them into the right motions! Even the Sattwa guna has to be transcended, for it also binds us to...well, to happiness, to Beauty. But if we offer our happiness to the Divine,

where is that bondage?

Whatever great feeling of nobility, of love, of friendship, of beautiful inspiration you might have, these are not of human emotion; they are of human character, of consciousness. These are two different things altogether. It is said: through your heart God speaks; through your head...you yourself speak. But be very careful not to misinterpret this true saying. God speaks through your purified, heightened consciousness, never through the selfish emotions of your human heart, neither through the calculative head.

Even the purest feelings, even inspiration, the ardour, the beauty are not yours. Give them back to the Divine exactly wherefrom they came to you.... [Silence] You probably will tell me that this is "not quite human." I am in a great hurry to agree with you! But who wants your "quite human?" Who wants your human sex, your human divorces, your human perversities? I don't! I hope neither do you....

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[After the performance of mystical pranayama]

Let us again turn to the concept of Sadhana! Sadhana, amongst other definitions, could be understood as the spiritual practices, disciplines, for the purpose of elimination of the ego! I have been explaining the meaning of this very, very allembracing concept many times, in many ways. So I will not repeat that which I have said, but I will now emphasize the point which is most essential for understanding the Sadhana: spiritual practices are aimed for the elimination of the ego. Now, the practice of pranayama in the spiritual way, for instance, is obviously impossible if you feel yourself as an ego, as a separate entity. If you at all practice it, you completely abnegate the sense of any kind of selfimportance! You become the breath when you do that. Consequently you become the consciousness. You can measure your fitness for Yoga or for spiritual life, for inner life, by your ability to dissolve your sense of importance!

If you can do that, you are fit. Student: Guru, how can we tell if we are practicing Sadhana?

Valentina: I just told you and you ask! If you can concentrate upon anything because it is right and because it is proper and because it leads you towards getting rid of your lower nature, or egoity, you are performing Sadhana. If the ego is involved, it cannot be called Sadhana! Sadhana is that practice where the lower ambition is annihilated.

When you are practicing Sadhana with the purpose of getting something out of it, you are not practicing Sadhana. When you are practicing Sadhana because you adore it, because you want to better yourself for the sake of perfection, you are performing Sadhana. You can, for instance, perform some good deed, and yet it cannot and should not be called Sadhana. That is exactly where the...student makes a mistake. I hesitated to say the "aspirant." I say the student. The aspirant already knows, or should know, that the performance of Sadhana implies disinterestedness as far as selfseeking is concerned. You are doing good because it is good. You are doing it because it is acceptable to the Divine. It is done spiritually and idealistically, but the true man does not know that it is all that high! The moment he thinks he is very advanced, or so spiritual, out he goes in Patala! If he tries intellectually, it is still not true Sadhana, it has to be intense naturally. Of course, it is better to start "trying" than not to discriminate and consider yourself a great Sadhaka only because you are occupied in philanthropy or some kind of "service." This is not Sadhana. This is selfexpression; this is ambition in disguise, but it is not Sadhana! The socalled "service" is 95% egoseeking! It is all based on selfish pleasure to establish prestige, popularity, etc. Seldom it is done for God, mostly not even for people, but for

your desire to be liked by people, appear in the press, have a big following, etc. This is undivine. This is not Sadhana!

Student: I understand what You are saying, Valentina, but I don't see why we should get rid of our egos, what would be left of us without it?

Valentina: You understaaand?! Oh, you forgot to add the syllable "mis!" It. is slightly pathetic! You dare say you "understand" what I say! And yet you ask such an absurd question! The worldly man does not understand what is meant by elimination of the ego, and our whole civilization is based on building up the ego rather than getting rid of it! You are to get rid of the TamoRajasic ego only! You are to cultivate the Sattwic individuality.

To put it into the realm accessible to everybody: Sadhana is done for the purpose of destroying, I repeat again, the egoity, the sense of selfimportance, the sense of competitive assertiveness. But if you do not even want to notice these traits of the lower human nature and think that... "nothing will be left of you" without your inferior part, then you pronounce your own verdict"defective, but leave me alone."

Student: I've been following Your instructions, but I never feel the Divine.

Valentina: You cannot invoke the Divine, you cannot invoke the Sakti, the Mother, if you are doing something in the selfish manner! You invoke Her spontaneously when you are doing "whatsoever is lovely," for the beauty of the deed itself, without any calculation, just with inspiration and desire to please the Divine, to open yourself for the Divine. The Divine is that which sustains everything and which is Perfect. You want to open yourself to It and you are doing things only for that purpose, in order to be accepted by the Perfection. But if you do it mechanically, how can you expect to feel the Divine? You are not to do it because you want a praise or because you want an approval. You are to do it because you just cannot help doing it, because it is your nature! It is then the Sattwic individuality in you. The TamoRajasic individuality, or rather ego, (not worth the word "individuality" really) shows itself always in reactions of all kinds. It is a perpetual occupation with your feelings: how you feel viaàvis the world, visàvis friends, viaàvis Ashram, visàvis Guru, and all sorts of things. It is [Almost chanting] you, you, you, you, yooouu, you! [Ironically smiling) A nice song!

Well, when there is not such feeling, such sickening feeling, then you start practicing Sadhana! You are starting the thing for the purpose of Liberation, again a very wellknown word, very much in vogue, but still so seldom understood, liberation from this TamoRajasic entity in you, this actually selftorture, because it is a perpetual, perpetual occupation with the nonessential stuff Student: Guru, I know well this TamoRajasic state. Itseems it's my oftentimes condition and I must say, so many times have You saved me. Ijust feel so unworthy. I am dropping...

Valentina: If one is dropping but simultaneously is catching a straw even, if it is even a straw for him, but still is catching it (the Sadhana and the being under my guidance), then I can do everything. But if one is dropping and watching his dropping and sometimes even eulogizing it, or sometimes is disgusted with himself, just like in the case of majority and yet does not do anything, parallely, then I cannot do anything either. To have temptations, to drop morally, all this is absolutely natural, although not at all praiseworthy, but this is not the thing which should scare you. The thing which should scare you is the indifference to this place. All your vices and all these things this absolutely is nothing for me! I cannot help anybody who does not want the Ashram. If you are falling, that's not much surprise to me; everybody is in a dilemma. But very few people have such support as myself and the gods and this beautiful place which the gods gave me, you see?

The sins are the mistakes, horrible but correctable. The fatal fall is when you start to be indifferent to God. That is tragic. And then I cannot do anything. Because that is to fall down completelynot just the sin but the loss of faith and reverence to the Divine. The worst of the sinners is okay if he wants to love God. Krishna said so. "The worst of the sinners will cross this life safely if he made the right resolve," in other words, if he remembers God, you see? So that's what it is.

It's just like Sri Aurobindo once said, "The Divine doesn't need you but you need the Divine." If you don't need theDivine, then get out because He doesn't need you...does not run after you."

JULY

Fourth of July

God bless you with a very wonderful fourth of July. These flowers symbolize it [Motioning to an exquisite arrangement of carnations in front of Her)very, very beautiful. Somebody wants to say something? Yes?

Student: There is such confusion in the world today over the relationship between freedom and independence. Could Guru please clarify this for us?

Valentina: Independence and freedom are very correlated, but alas, very much misunderstood. Dependence, in terms of slavery and subservient position, is of course, extremely demoralizing, degenerating, humiliating. Therefore, man of courage always fights for independence. This is the exterior aspect of it; there is an interior also. [Pause)

Student: I am all for the man of courage! But what is the interior side?

Valentina: The inner aspect of independence, paradoxically enough, is connected with dependence; it does not exclude dependence. And here is where a "man of courage" often makes a blunder! Take an example of a child and parent. The child depends on the parent and does not resent his dependence, without which the relationship would be crippled. That kind of dependence is absolutely legalized by common sense, by sense of morality, by sense of honourability. By the same token, such dependence prepares for independence, it does not exclude it in terms of child's preparation for selfreliance, etc. Now take the example of the relationship of an animal and his master. The animal depends on the master and, if well trained, is very grateful for this dependence. There is an aspect of gratitude in that kind of dependence which is inevitable, which is legal, which is honourable. Inferior depends on the superior! A labourer depends on the thinker. Without the thinkerthe intelligent and educated manthe labourer will go astray; we would have nothing but strikes. Factually, that is what happens now. We do not have many intelligent leaders and it shows in the general degeneration. There is neither voluntary dependence nor honourable leadership! I hope it is clearer?!

Student: Hundred percent!

Valentina: To make it still more obvious, let us take the relationship of man to God. Man depends on God and this is the most beautiful dependence. This dependence includes, of course, reliance, faith, reverence and devotion.

So you see how extremely subtle all these concepts are. We cannot really divide them with the mathematical precision and say this is "dependence" and this is "independence."

Student: Do not independence and freedom go together? Valentina: Yes. But freedom is also a subtle concept! If you are free inward.

ly, you do not claim anything; you are happy; you do not fight for anything. A free man, as a matter of fact, is the man who never rebels, who never has to for he is free! It is a certain superior state of consciousness. He does not have to protest, because he is free! The sagely achievements are the greatest. A man of sagely development is the freest man, even if he is dependent on many, many circumstances. He voluntarily submits to various rules of society; he submits to the demands of his followers because...well, because he is free! He submits because he is very courteous, compassionate, honourable. That can be done only if one is inwardly free. Therefore, the best of the sages, of the saviours, of the thinkers, advocate always the achievement of inner freedom which then makes you the king of the kings and completely independent regardless of the political situation, of the familial situation, of the social or institutional situation, of whatever surrounds you. You still are free, if you have that inner freedom.

Student: But we all are free in that we can do whatever we want! After all, why shouldn't we? Is it wrong to follow our natural inclinations?

Valentina: Plenty wrong! Nobody can check on your thoughts, but outwardly, your "natural inclinations" are restricted by government, police, etc. But supposing there is no more restriction, order and disapproval, do what your nature tells you?! You will be altogether in chaos. Then comes the other country, which is not yet so corrupted and says: "All right, ladies and gentlemen, you are beasts and we are a little bit more controlled, hence, stronger than you. You now please do, not what you want, but what we

want." Here goes your "independence!" And starts civil war or [Smiling] maybe Satyagraha! Something which throws off the slavery. Okay. But it is throwing off only the outer slavery! For, if inside, man is still a slave, then the repetitiousness will take place again. Man will repeat exactly the same thing. So political independence is nothing much, unless man is worthy of it.

That is what I want to tell you on this lovely day, that especially, when you are an aspirant after Truth, there should be a distinct discrimination between the subtle slavery on the background of seeming independence, and the true inner independence. Fight for real independence without anybody noticing it; acquire real freedom. You will be able to harmonize these seeming paradoxes: the healthy dependency and just as healthy independence. Be free from sin, from the opinion, from the, above all, selfimposed slavery.

So that's on the Fourth of July! God bless you. Om Sakti.

Preparation for Guru Purnima

Guru Purnima is rededication to the teachings of the Guru. This is not the oretical rededication; it is very practical. It is to observe yourself, analyze your self, understand yourself more than during any other observance. Ask yourself the "why" and the "what" and answer it! View and review your general attitudes as well as your progress and success on the Path. What have you been doing these years, those of you who are on the Path for a long time? How did you behave during the last Guru Purnima? What did you derive? What will be your particular needs, resolves and special sadhanas during this Guru Purnima?

During Guru Purnima, every one of you is given a chance to understand himself and start with new enthusiasm the same Path on either a lower rung than you were before, or on the same rung or on a higher rung!

... During these days of preparation for Guru Purnima proper, which is on the full moon of July, you are given an opportunity to study the very high Precepts of the Eternal Truth and to make it the keynote of your existence. And as to everydayness, not to ignore and to run away from it but to look upon it as a kindergarten, as something immature. and everything

which is not the high Precepts should be looked upon as immaturity, as man's limitation rather than man's necessity. When you have such attitude, lo and behold, all the "byproducts" of your life (family, job an so forth) will fall in their own place. It is not that you are neglecting them, but it is that you are looking at them through the right prism, the right perspective.

If, till now you have been stressing so much more your own emotional life rather than your dedication to the Everlasting, you ought to reverse the attitudes. Then you will have the wise appreciation of your friends, of your relatives, of your profession and everything. This requires, it goes without saying, a great concentration upon something high.

Student: Valentina, it is very lofty what You tell us, but it seems so far removed from our experience and understanding.

Valentina: Has there been no example set in humanity, then we might have thought that what I stress is...chimeric. Just think of Lord Krishna's perfection in arts and Yoga and know that the impossible is possible. You may argue that He was a God. He was! But the God came to man to show him that potentially he too is divine.

Student: Why is it that we don't seem to move higher?

Valentina: because you do not want it strongly enough. It is difficult to live the life of awareness of the Higher Values due to so many limitations of the body and the mind and the society and the world. The one who chooses the Path different from the ways of mobs is the one who has to feel himself like a hero, for he has to swim against the current. There are heroes who did oppose and are opposing the "chicken coop" existence! Eagles!

Every observance is inviting you to partake of the Eagle life, and, at least in that small short period, to forget your limitations; to just fervently pray that you might be lifted unto the likeness of a hero. So that is what it is! When sacrifice is the joy, you are the Eagle...at least during Guru Purnima, be heroic! Grow your wings, the Eaglewings!

Student: That is, alas, about the best I can expect of myself; to raise higher at least during Guru Purnima.

Valentina: And then again the same old you?! I'll tell you something: you never will be the same old you with all your lukewarmness if at least once in your life you raised above the mediocrity...but really raised... Your next steps will be higher and stronger. Every observance is your new chance.

Guru Purnima is a serious month of rededication. (Every month is here very serious.) But don't mistake earnestness and seriousness for joylessness.

Student: Valentina, why is it that some people at the Ashram are so joyless? Valentina: It is true that some people do not have the capacity of being serious yet joyous. That is why their faces grow a little longer than they should! And sometimes people think it is too serious [Smiling) in spite of all the entertainments I give you! And it really isn't. there is no such thing as "too serious," there is either earnest approach or foolish approach.

Student: I don't know what kind of Ashram this would be without Valentina's sparkle and entertainments.

Valentina: You don't know? Well...where your heart is, there your treasure is. You reveal yourself! [Laughter] There is time for sparks and smiles, but on the background of absorption and concentration. You cannot really dilute things which are in their very essence earnest and high. You cannot make them foolish and low, can you? But you can and should put into even the highest much of your sense of humour, vitality and charm. For that makes the Path colourful, joyous, makes the unbearable bearable. Mark well; there should not be any compromise, guard your principles! Never dilute. Never do things which should not be done...

Understand that during these weeks of Guru Purnima it is required of you to be grave, but by no means your graveness should exclude the sense of humour.

Student: I think I understand it is great to bring fun into life and work, for that matter, Ashram too!

Valentina: Not quite so simple. Humour is a very rare gift of gods, very rare. Very seldom people have it. Mostly they have perhaps an inclination to giggle, to be amused, but it is not a sense of humour. A sense of humour is based on the ability to notice the absurdities and to smile at them, even if through tears! Man of humour is a kind man; man of satire is not. He sees only negativities, Silly man giggles; angry man scorns; good man smiles, smiles sometimes unnoticeablynobody knows that he smiles.

You have to develop that smile which goes together with seriousness, not with lightmindedness, but with seriousness, real seriousness, and then to notice things and to smile at them instead of beat your breast and shout yet do nothing!

So these are the things which I want you to ponder uponknow that there should be neither giggly, lightminded nor overly grave air about you. These are most essential prerequisites in the practice of Sadhana in general and at Guru Purnima in particular. Mean it!

Student: Guru, thank You for Your high standards. For, if there is one thing I have learned from being here with You, it is to respect the high standards. It is only here that I understood the word Path and I really fear the glib talk now. I know in most groups there is only tall talk.

Valentina: After so much beating, you should understand! [Laughter] It just occurred to me that I can beat you out of everything but one thing. There is one particular and peculiar vice in human nature which is the only one that is not obvious. Every other vice is rather obvious, but this one hides itself very sneakily. Do you know its name?

Student: I don't think I do.

Valentina: [Turning to another student/ What do you think, do you know?

Student: I give up. I try...to conceal all of them, [Uproar]

Third student: Hits home! Guru, what's the name of the monster?

Valentina: Don't you recognize it? I was rightit does hide thoroughly! The name of this superduper asura is hypocrisy, the most dangerous and the most atrocious.

Hypocrisy is in every possible sphere but the most unacceptable to God it is when it creeps into the spiritual. And as to Guru Purnima, nobody can partake of it, really and truly, unless one has the call for it; otherwise it is of paramount hypocrisy. It goes without saying that if you are partaking of it without hypocrisy, you simultaneously curb every possible negativity or vice. It is not that you will become a little angel with pretty wings. No, no. But you will recognize that you are not a little angel. And that honesty and humility is a sign of the awakening of Truth from within. However, it does not mean that you will be using your usual affectations, proclaiming yourself a sinner; that is affected and that is not noble either. Rather, it would be a condensed inner evaluation.

Student: It is a wonderful opportunity You give to us through Guru Purnima to understand ourselves.

Valentina: Sure it is a wonderful opportunity. Do not miss it, that is the only point. The opportunity is there every day for everybody. Just don't miss it. When certain time is put aside (and astrologically, it is very auspicious) man awakens at least for a short time. And every time this short time leaves a new groove in his consciousness, and as the years roll on, man finds that he is minus some of his folly and plus a little bit of God's Wisdom. That is really the impact.

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Student: Is there a special Sadhana which Guru could give us for the Guru Purnima?

Valentina: The special Sadhana is to save your energy for higher practices. Watch yourself; do not speak that which is not necessary; whatever you say should be on the higher tone. Talk measured words. Sometimes we are confronted during the day with various duties which require talking and sometimes talking on the unspiritual topics. It does not matter so long as you, within yourself, remember the higher tone, the higher note. You can deal then with any topic at all. In other words, abstinence from unnecessary speech does not include complete withdrawal and no speech at all, for it is very impractical if you are in the world confronted with duties and some karmic obligations.

Do not mingle unless necessary, and by the same token, do not become conspicuously aloof, for that is ungraceful and unnecessary. When Gurudev would often exclaimmix with all, mix freely, He never meant gregariousness, but rather, graciousness! Do not write that which is not necessary; whatever you write should be also on the higher tone.

The most important thing, however, is not to become rigid, for very often man who has no spontaneity and real taste for the higher expression compels himself to be high. And that is even worse than to be low, for that precisely is hypocrisy.

Student: Does not preservation of energy suggest too much selfconcern, almost selfishness in other words, "I will do that much and nothing more!"

Valentina: Not really. Talking about the Guru Purnima, the preservation of energy remains very important and valid. Use the energy for assimilation of the Teachings, for the application of the Teachings, for thorough meditation upon the principles.

Whatever you have derived out of my talks, you just love! It will unite you with another one who thinks on the same topic. Consequently, there will be a strong dynamo of spiritual vibration. With that I bless you. Om Sakti. Om Guru Purnima. Om Guru!my Guru.

Guru Purnima

July 23 - August 1, 1975

Student: Guru, tonight is the night! It reminds of when You said that if I would see the Divine Mother through Guru I would be safe.

Valentina: Sure, you do not have to see me; you have to see the same Sakti which I see through Gurudev. If God sends to you an opportunity to love Him and to understand Him more tangibly than if you would just be praying to the cloud, take this opportunity! God is not in the cloudHe is not hidden; He is in you and He is in me. And if you love me, not personally, not just Valentina, but through me the Divine Mother who wants you to come

to Her and gives you an opportunity to love a human being as if you would love Herthen you are safe! Absolutely safe. Nothing dirty will touch you, nothing dangerous will touch you because then you are reinforcing within yourself the contact with the Mother, with God Himself! Do you understand how awesome it is?!

That is what Guru Purnima is. It is not just that I put an ochre cloth on my head and that we have so many wonderful flowers and that it is Sivananda's portrait there. It is not at all this. If we would be in the open field, without any symbology, it would be also Guru Purnima. Yet be grateful that you have a Holy Shrine, it reinforces the vibrations, but know that it is the adoration of the Supreme which makes this place holy.

During this day I was meditating plenty and I hope you were too. And it occurred to me that the best offering to Guru Purnima is to be spotless. It means to sacrifice the beast easily, readily and quickly. As a matter of fact, that was the actual meaning of the sacrificial acts, sacrifice the goat within you, my Children! It is not just to kill the poor little goat, but there is the goat, the bull, the dog and everything possible of the zoo in man. Therefore, on the day of Guru Purnima, when you are offering yourself to Guru, the Lord, the Supreme who speaks through Guru, you are to sacrifice everything, everything within you. Endeavour to be spotless, spotless, absolutely clean, not like an angel or these flowers, but like you, like the best you. I have been sufficiently harping upon it. You can find it almost in any discourse. It has so far been the leitmotif of this year..."the best you."

During Guru Purnima, your very best has to be manifested fully! Just as we have the best dress, we have the best jewels, the best flowers so we have "the best us," the best ourselves. You have the best you and you have to wear it.

Now, if you will be able to sincerely offer all your wonderful qualities (you have them; you just have to take them out, air them out and polish them)if you will be able to do that on special observances, in spite of the reaction, you will be one rung higher. And some, those who can leap real high, will go ten rungs higher! (Smiling) Hey, how 'bout that?! It sounds very good to me! Student: What Guru just said was so inspiring. It just seemed to tie in with what Guru told us once that not only should one be "the best you" but also the best Child of God.

Valentina: Right! The best child of God, for goodness gracious sake, yes! Feel yourself divine; feel yourself not an orphan; feel yourself not an outcast; feel yourself an heir of God! His best, His Child. For the Lord verily sees you as His Child.

Now why is it that you do not hear Him and why is it that your prayers are not answered? Because you do not feel yourself His Child. You are all the time acting like a beggar. "Give me, God, give me, God, please gimme, gimme, gimme." But if you really love, and if you really give, without thinking of "mutuality" but just give even as the rose is, thankfully stretching the petals to the Sun, to the Sun, Guru Purnima Sun!well, then you are acting your best. Then you are the best, the best. And then what happens? You are acting in such a way that everyone who passes by you will be influenced. And supposing everyone would be influencing each other spiritually then it will be Devaloka! You have to be in such condition and state of mind that you can project the benevolent influence upon all. And the "Sun" gives you the strength and the warmth and the cleansing. Guru is the Sun. Disciplethe reflecting Moon.

Guru Purnima the blessed divine Influence...

...I have just said that the Sun is Guru. And every one of you will feel like the moon which is borrowing the light from the Sun. Now, this is a poetic, metaphoric way of thinking. but if you will go deeper and forget the outer symbology but really feel that there is the splendour of the Eternal Guru, God, and the whole Universe is borrowing Light from THAT, if you will be able to forget yourself completely and remember only that splendour, you will understand what Guru Purnima is. In proportion to your earnestness, and your depth, and your dedication, you will get the Light. It is very, very splendid; indeed it is. Do meditate upon the blazing splendour of the Divine Sunthe GuruGod. (Silence]

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Guru Purnimait is the most noble concept. We have to start by prostration to all the Lightgivers, to everyone who brought Light into this rather dim earth. Traditionally, in India, it is prostrations to Sage Vyasa who compiled the Vedas and who is known as the first Guru, the first Lightgiver. So that is my first prayer, the prayer of thanksgiving to Sage Vyasa. I usually expand the list. I pray to all the Saviours, all the Lightshowers, all the Gurus, to all the Invisible Hierarchy of Light as well as to the manifested ones. And you please join me in that prayer. We will have music.

[Following music, prayer and silence]

Yes... We now were praying to all the Lightgivers and Wayshowers and the most intimate one on my list is Gurudev Sivananda. Prostrations to Swami Sivananda. Om Guru. Om Guru Purnima.

Gurudev's Maha Samadhi

August 1, 1975

Gurudev Sivananda arrived to the identification with the omniscient and real and everlasting! It is a state of what is called in Sanskrit "Jivanmukta", the liberated Soul. People talk much about the Soul but very few know what it is.

Man functions only in his outer stuff. It is called a desire soul, a desire entity. I told you that many times. And behind it is the real Soul, the omniscient, omnipresent, the beautiful One. Now, if through many Sadhanas, through many purifications, one reaches that state of consciousness where he functions in the Real Being, the Soul, there is no death for such a one. And that is what occupied my mind today, all day longthat there is no death for a sage like Gurudevthere is no such thing! He functions in luminous, absolute Consciousness...unlike those who have not the right understanding, whose lives are unvigilant and impure,such, in the words of the Upanishads, "reach not the End of the Journey, but transmigrate and wander on from death to death."

Mysterious are the ways of the Jivanmuktano one can understand themthey hide their Real Being under many garbs, depending on what their Mission requires from them. Sivananda's task was to accelerate the Immortality for mankind at large. It is impossible, but the attempt of the Jivanmukta is always to do the impossible things! So he endeavoured the impossible!

He was, at times, scaring, or rather warning, quoting the Puranas. Puranas are the Scriptures which picturesquely deal with various states of consciousness hereafter,

describing the various lokasloka or locality. English word "locality" is derived from that Sanskrit word "loka".

Gurudev would say, "If you don't want to get to Pretaloka, you be careful." What is this Pretaloka? Pretaloka is filled up with souls who are devoured by the unfulfilled desire. Rather terrible state of affairs. It is said that after the death, man goes into unconsciousness first, and then he wakes up precisely there, in such kind of consciousness, which resulted in certain deeds. Pretaloka is the plane where the disembodied man finds himself after leading the life of indulgences. A man of lust finds himself in Pretaloka; a man of anger, a man of any unfulfilled strong passion, or perhaps overindulged strong passion, finds himself in what is called pretaloka. And the torments and the suffering in that loka are indescribableit takes Puranas to describe it! It is said that man is intensely longing for that which he was usually indulging or thinking about to indulge and is deprived of this and is all the time filled up with fever of burning desires which are literally tearing him to pieces. And Gurudev often would warn and then would say also how wonderful it is if you can pray for people in Pretaloka.

First student: You sure described it scary! I pray to have strength not to ever land in this Pretaloka!

Valentina: Yes, my Child, thank you for paying attention to what I just told you! Let us pray for the Pretaloka!

Second student: In Christian religion, prayer for the deceased is considered very charitable. And Valentina, I am grateful You stress it here so much even more and make us aware of the true privilege it is.

Valentina: Indeed, I always say that it is a privilege, not duty, to pray for the deceased. What we are doing here is not only a prayer for the deceased we loved and knew; it is not only those who are on our list, but it is in general for the souls who need the Mantra, the love of ours, the prayer, as well as the remembrance of their suffering. And when I say "theirs," I always add "ours," for verily, man is frail and knows not where he may find himself...Man is absolutely unreliable when he is dwelling in his lower state of consciousness.

Well, the Mantras for the deceased are very helpful, and when man just passes away, through the Mantra, you are invoking his spirit to leave quickly and to drop his physical body. You "dissolve," by Mantra and prayer, first the physical body and then the astral desires. Therefore, my Gurudev was very, very, very precise about the remembrance of thedeceased, the helping to the deceased, serving to the deceased through prayerwhat iscalled in Sanskrit, "Sraddha" or the FaithRitual dedicated to the remembrance of the deceased.

Irepeat, there is no death for the sage and that is why I am talking about death, in order toemphasize that there is no death for the one whose Maha Samadhi tonight we are observing. He is here, witnessing, listening, prompting me, sometimes helping me, correcting me, telling me things... [Whispering] "Don't scare them." I say, Gurudev, but you used to scare everybody out of their pants!" And He says, "Well, that was me, you're not supposed to!" Okay, so I won't; I'll tell you about Indraloka and Devaloka and Brahmaloka. The good lokas! [Smiling) There one goes when one is fulfilled pretty well in his inner life and goes there to enjoy and to rejoice.

But again GurudevI have to quote Him because it is His night, it's not mine. So what He says, I cannot help it, He would say, "Don't bother about the Devaloka, don't; go up higher! Because even the devas are not permanent. Only Brahman is permanent! Realize Him and become Him! Give up everything else!..." Okay, Gurudev, I gave up...

So that's it...that's it.

[After a short pause) He would tirelessly, tirelessly remind about the necessity of establishing the inner rhythm. He would say that man is literally murdering himself if he is leading the life of the indulgences. It is just as if you are throwing away your Immortality and acquiring nothing but a perpetual death. That is what He was saying, that is what it is. We are raising within ourselves the life everlasting only through great and wonderful cultures and practices.

He would also tirelessly quote from the Bhagavad Gita quoting the Lord: "Put thy whole heart into Me, think about Me all the time; verily thou will find thyself in Me", in other words, in Salvation, in Immortality. And Gurudev would advocate the Sadhana of remembrance. He would say if you are accustomed to think about the Supreme Self all the time, if whatever you are doing you are doing on the background of knowing that there

is behind you your real Self and that real Self is identical to the Absolute, then when time comes to say goodbye to your mortal, earthly existence, you will find yourself in the Immortal Consciousness. You will remember God and therefore you will become one with Him.

Ihope from what I said it is clear to all of you that that Sage, that liberated Soul, that generous, dynamic personality, lived only in the Eternal and whatever was left of His consciousness available for the relative reality He would give for the raising of the consciousness of the whole humanity. If one such giant thinks even one thought, it is more strong than all the propaganda He himself was making! Lots of propaganda Gurudev madebut probably it was necessary! His whole idea was to raise the consciousness of man, to save him from that dissipation, from that thoughtlessness, from the terrible oblivion of the Self. [Pause]... Yes, terrible. It is again what I have been telling you it is horrible to live and to die without any hope for Immortality. But he said that it should not be, that you should live here in order to raise yourself to such an extent that you would not have to be born again as if against your willGod knows in what body or in what loka... You see, when you reach that Liberation, that full consciousness of God, the ever ceaseless state, then what happens? Then you are totally free from all the claims of Karma. You cannot be anymore the slave. It is great freedom. Tonight we shall be free in prayer, in hope, in thought...

The Upanishads assures us that when the Highest Consciousness manifests Itself, man becomes free from the jaws of death. [Silence] Let us prostrate to the Immortality! Let us pray to Gurudev to bless us in our journey towards the Supreme End... Om Namah Sivaya.

Resume of July

[In the Garden]

Valentina: Before going into silence, perhaps I will tell you a short word. And that is: Congratulations! You passed the exams! Guru Purnima is over!

Everyone increased hisher intelligence at least a little! For it was quite a comprehensive month! There was plenty to absorb, to receive, to understand. As far as rededication is concerned, as far as Guru Bhakti is concerned, I leave it to everybody to judge for himself.

Not that I do not know your temperature, but I leave it to you to learn about it, to go into yourself and to see where you find yourself. Do you find yourself more or do you find yourself less or do you find yourself the same? That is the thing which you have to find out for yourself.

Now, because the events were presto prestissimo in July, I did not have a chance to baptize this glorious month! And it, of course, is pertaining to Guru Purnima. Therefore the name of it is?... Now come on, voice! Raise your hand who wants to name it. Yes?

Student: "Guru" is the name!

Valentina: Okay. What else?

Student: "Light!"

Valentina: Okay. What else? Secretaire sleepy, snoozy! [Laughter]

Student: "Sunshine!"

Valentina: Hey, that is not a bad one! "Sunshine" it indeed was. Sunshine is the forever of Guru's Grace.

Well...this is the poetry of Guru Purnima. Now business! Rededication is what this month revealed to us. In other words, what you have voiced is very clear to you, to the disciple, to the nucleus, to the follower; but supposing [Smiling] someone in Alaska will hear it or will read it when you will publish my words! He knows nothing about Guru Purnima really, and about the sentiments and the poetry of it, but he wants to know precisely what it is about. And it is about rededicating yourself (of course implying that you were dedicated)! So man in Alaska will feel: "Gee, I better become dedicated." And then he will find out what it is to be dedicated to. He will learn about Guru; and he will learn about Sunshine and he will learn about Light and he will learn about Life! But first it has to be rededication. Really and truly! Rededication to everything which you have just mentioned.

Rededication to Light, to Guru, to Sunshine which Guru gives, to everything which pertains to the Goal. So thatis the essential name; the pet names are many!

AUGUST

[Night in the Garden]

After intense evening of Nada Yoga, asana and Pranayama, comes the sudden threat of thunderstorm, lightning very profusely] Okay, now I am using the accelerated tempo because I want to be ahead of Durga! [Valentina, turning Her gaze towards the Heavens] No! Never can be ahead of Durga. Mother!...But can be safe while together with Her.

Now, this month, how shall I call it? I shall call it The Call! The leitmotif of this month is the Call of the Flute of the Divine Krishna, for it is His month. He is calling you always, forever amen, throughout the Eternity! And He is calling you more tangibly at Krishna Jayanti, the Birthday of Lord Krishna. Therefore, I call this glorious coming month The Call! [Suddenly the wind starts blowing harder, the gate slams shut and Valentina covers Herself, wrapping Herself in Her shawl] Hey, stop the winds! Oh Durga! [Laughter]...So you have to prepare yourself to hear the Call. And that also implies the review of the whole calendar, of all this half a year which you lived with me. And I refer to the artistic department. We have a really exquisite calendar pertaining to every month. Make it your business to write down the name of each month and to contemplate them, to meditate upon them.

Student: Really and truly, we only made exclamations, but seldom honesttogoodness real work.

Valentina: Good confession! Do the real work for a change, work on yourself! You have to take all those names which I give to each month seriously and businesslike. It is the name of your Sadhana; it is the name of your inner life; it is the name of your possibilities, hence the name of your future! For every month paves the road to the other month and the other month paves the road to Infinity! Not to the end of this life, I don't believe in the "end." There is no such thing as the "end!" It is all just misconception. Student: Because we live on a very funny planet?

Valentina: Yes, if you want to put it so. There is no death; there is only change and infinite progress towards Perfection. If you take it in such grand spirit, you certainly will take the name "Call" very seriously and very lovingly and very ardently and very humbly. For it is

God who calls you and it is your business just to listen to the Call and then turn yourself to it and then march towards it. [Turning to the sky which is throwing flashes of lightning) Run...but gracefully! God bless you!

[Next day]

Student: Guru, thank You for last night. It was a fantastic experience. It was as if the Flute of Krishna was really calling us.

Valentina: Yes, it is so extremely fantastic in the best sense of the word. Fantastic in the sense that it is so thrilling, so exquisite, so different and yet so real. But you are sentimentalizing it and do not get the real essence! The "Call" is always there; it is the Call of the Divine Strata, of the Higher Vibration of the Divine. But you cannot hear it through your surface brain or through your nervous system. It is only the soul that hears the Call. So when you are talking about it intellectually and when you are thinking about it mentally, you do not hear the Call. When you are stirred within yourself by inspiration, you hear the

Call! However, very few people are inspired...Alas. Student: Guru, the "alas" is unfortunately true! What You have told us is so inspiring and yet it seems that we cannot truly respond to the Call. Why is this?

Valentina: Because you think and not love. If you would "love and think" you would be inspired.

Student: It seems that in most people the soul does not at all operate, to such an extent they are not responding to the Call!

Valentina: True! for it is isolated from all their other parts. The soul is entirely pure and very luminous and very beautiful and it simply is "not interested" it keeps aloof until the other parts are sufficiently prepared for receiv ing its influence. Some occultists even say that most people are "soulless." It is not that they do not have a soul, but it is that they do not live in the soul; the soul is hidden. To invoke the highest part within yourself is impossible unless there is the intense sincerity within yourself, that is to say, unless the predominant part of you sincerely wants it, very sincerely, really and truly. And when you

are assailed by negative thoughts (not even temptations, but simply ugly suggestions from your subconscious mind and from the world outside), you have to be so alert that you immediately reject them, immediately are horrified by them, immediately praying that they should not influence you! Then you invoke that soul force! When you are doing that, the Higher in you responds; it is pleased. And that Higher in you is connected with God; that Higher in you hears the Call of Krishna all the time, but it cannot transmit it to your earthly, physical personality which is deaf and stubborn. Hencealertness, will, devotion, love are your awakeners. Also firm conviction that the gross part of your personality is simply a "crust" which has to be removed. Don't be unduly ashamed by itit is just a donkey!

Student: What is most acceptable to Krishna's heart?

Valentina: The love of the Gopis.

Student: In stupefied tone Could You elaborate?

Valentina: My Child, have mercy upon me. I am a little fed up of simplifications and elaborations. What is not clear?

Student: What is best for me, for my attitude towards Krishna?

Valentina: You won't make a mistake if you will develop some Bhakti in yourself, [Smiling] if you will have a little element of the Gopi in you. The Gopis personify the Bhakti, the intensest adoration to their Lord. Every Gopi thought that the Lotus Eyes are hers and nobody else's. The next Gopishe better don't even look! [Laughter]

Student: Just like in Guru Bhakti.

Valentina: Just like in Guru Bhakti, except that Guru Bhakti most times is marred by the personal feelings. In the case of the Gopis, there was a very passionate, personal element there but it was for the Divine, except each Gopi thought that KrishnaGopala is hersnobody else's! And He, through His YogaMaya, could multiply Himself and, as you

remember, could dance simultaneously with every one of them. And every one of them thought that she is dancing with Him only and that the rest don't even know!

So this is it the adoration of the Gopis to Lord Krishna was absolutely pure, divine and exalted. There indeed was an element of personal ardour, however it was on the background of the impersonal adoration of God Himself. High? Pretty high! You cannot even see it if you raise your neck. Beautiful? Very beautiful. So [Smiling/ it is worthwhile to break your neck and look up high. God bless you all!...

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Student: Guru, where there is no bone and flesh mutuality, what then is there for the lover?

Valentina: [Laughs/ Probably lamentations and threats of suicide!

Student: But...

Valentina: [Wit a jesting threat] Nagging again?!

Student: Sorry...sorry, but Guru, what happens in the case of the real love where there is no bone and flesh mutuality?

Valentina: The lover does have mutuality in that he is stirring the force of love itself. It is adoring love for love's sake! In that case one is dealing with the force of Love. There is the Universal Divine Force of Love. Every love which you or I experience is only that Love. Our love is possible only because it is kindled by that enormous blaze of Divine Sakti. It never is lost the pure feeling is never lost, the pure adoration. It stimulates your own forces.

Student: It is not ordinary mutuality!

Valentina: Indeed it is not! It is mutuality in the sense that you are kindled by love and get the response from the love force itself! And in that case it simply stimulates your own quality as well as makes you magneticthat's how this kind of mutuality goes.

Student: Then does not the object of the lover stand very similarly to a symbol, or the ideal?

Valentina: Right, it's just like an Ishta Devata for the Bhakta in a sense and it has no aftereffects. In other words...we'll put it in a very concise wordwhere there is no desire, there is love. Where there is a desire there is frustration always, inevitably.

Student: Gee, that's terrific, really, it just clarified in my mind so many other things along the line.

Valentina: But it is not easy, my Child, because supposedly there is a very harmonious contact between people...now I am talking about the communicative, concrete love the exchange of forces, as I put it. And supposing one pours out the force in an extremely lavish and generous way and another takes, but is silent, or takes and does not return with the same tempo and speed, you see? Then there is definitely again Maya creeping and saying, "Look, you are so colourful, you are so beautiful; you give, give and give," and puts that same connotation of the ordinary worldly passion and worldly lovers, you see? It is not easy not to have a desire, because the desire is a...how would I say...it is a stirring and stimulating force in everything. But in the real love, the desire is definitely replaced by ardour, by creative aspiration to make the communication perfect. Yet even pure ardour can degenerate very, very quickly, almost unnoticeably into the gross desire, you see?

Student: It seems that this "real love" requires great care.

Valentina: It requires first of all great lovers! Care? Yes, but far more subtle care than in the case between the stronger and the weaker, like in the case of a protective mother. It always has an element of that, it always does, but there is also equality. The "care" of intense and elevated love is spontaneous, mutual delicacy of feelings, the sweet and ardent reverence for each other's thoughts, feelings, environmentsanything pertaining to the beloved is sacred.

Love is not fully harmonious unless there is equality. By equality I mean the same potential in lovers.

Student: How about man visàvis God is there equality here?

Valentina: [Smiles) Potentially there is, for "I am Brahman within this body," and... "Even if I haven't conquered Thee yet, oh Lord, I still adore Thee." There is a real assurance of victory, of response, of being loved...To tell you candidly, there is no such thing as love unreturned and not shared! If some sentimental fool will tell you there is such love, don't believe it! There is no such thing. If it is love, it is mutual. Otherwise it is craving for love, yet deceiving yourself in case of pseudospirituality, "Oh, I only give, I do not look for a return!" Lie! Love is a fulfillment. But the mutuality of love which I know as love is different from mutuality of love which usually is parading as love. What man is claiming as love is either infatuation or passion or possessiveness, and certainly there is no spontaneous exchange in such. Usually one gives a little more...and another cares a little less! So it is a clash, not love. Student: Boy! Your mutuality must be beautiful.

Valentina: Fully agree! [Laughter] The Force unites the two loveliest receptacles only because the receptacles are gloriously reflecting that Force! Indeed, then the Force can allow Itself fullswing play. Take Vivekananda and Ramakrishna. (You see how sexless is real love! Ramakrishna, with the scorn in his voice would say, "Well, do you think I love him, that boy? Of course not! I love the Divine in him. I love him because he is manifesting the Infinity more than the others." Love of the mystic is not vague, not infatuation with the finite under the pretense of the love of the Infinite. Love of the true lover is a fully and perfectly Conscious Lovea Realization, not an imagination.

Student: Now supposing one of the receptacles stopped reflecting that Force for some reason, and by that reason does not anymore manifest, produce or vibrate those wonderful qualities which compel Love?!

Valentina: Then Love withdraws. Supposing Vivekananda (although it is hard to imagine) would stop manifesting the Divine, supposing he would lock himself and the Divine would leave himthat Force of conscious Love,would Ramakrishna love him the way he did? Of course not! Of course not. He would be sorry for him, he would pray for him, he would forgive him...but there could not be the same ardour. Then the feelings lose flame; it is

just a compassion, a forgiveness, a whatever you want to call itanother aspect of love! But it is not the ardour, the creative, constructive, full of exchange of great dynamo Force.

Student: Guru, what if one whom You love disappoints You?

Valentina: Supposing I would be disappointed, so forth and so onl wouldn't love the person at all, but I would love...I would love. Do you understand? It would be not my love, but it would be Love!

Student: Yes, Ma'am. It seems now that it doesn't matter what happens, that as long as Guru has love in Her Heart, Love simply is!

Valentina: Okay. I have Love always. You see, my Child, it is just very similar to what I am telling you, the Universal Force. I have so much Love, darn it! Now whoever doesn't deserve or respond becomes just a blank spot for me, but the Love comes back into my heart and remains there. That's what it is. But to weep all my life (Smiling), that I never do... [With charming laugh] It just occurred to me that Emerson, whom you so admire and love, said along these lines very cleverly and not without wit. He said: "Love is strongest when it is pursued, whereas friendship is strongest when it is possessed." [Short silence] Do you understand?

Student: Yees, Ma'am, I do understand.

Valentina: I don't feel that you grasped; there is a puzzlement in your voice,

Student: Please help.

Valentina: Friendship is absolutely sure in hand that you have it; otherwise it is not friendship. You do not have to run after it. If it is friendship, it emanates benevolence and exchange of what is needed by both parties...and is strongest when fully possessed.

Student: But doesn't friendship have to be constantly kindled? Valentina: Not so much kindled as cherished. You do have to take care of everything precious, it goes without saying. But you see, friendship, my Child, the very concept of friendship, is denoting the

fulfilled relationship; that is why it is strongest "when possessed." If you have friendship, you are sharers and companions on the higher level or on the lower level. It is the thing which does not compel any "pursuing" because it is a mutual agreement to be comfortable! It is a different thing altogether. It is a very beautiful thing when it is on a high level; it is nonsense when it is on the low level, but still it is a comforting thing.

It is a thing where you are totally relaxed. Whereas love is just the opposite; it is a thing where you are never relaxed!

You are all the time in pursuing; you are all the time fanning it and taking care of it. All the time there is a great intenseness in it. If it is not intense goodbye love! Love knows no relaxation. It is always to please the Beloved. And when you are pleasing the Beloved you are aflame. And when you are aflame you definitely are not sitting in an easy arm chair! So there is an element and God bless Emerson, that's not my aphorisman element of "pursuing" is all the time present in the very great ardour. But it is not an anxiety and martyrdom, for you do have that soothing friendship as an ingredient! But still that element is just like a breezenever will be able to stop. A breeze won't be a breeze if it will be stopped! [Turning Her head around and inhaling) Feel that breeze?!...

... This earnest longing, the fervour, is present even in the case of the ardent Bhakta. He weeps the tears of separation with the Lord. He is not sure that he has Him. He pursues his Love. But mind you, this is only a phase which the Bhakta accepts, deeply knowing in his heart that he is never alone, but that he wants the Beloved to be closer than his very breath. That is why he is gasping; he wants Love to be completely his; he wants to have It right here, alwaystangibly just drink It... When he will have such Bliss, he will have no such tears.

Student: Wow, Guru, beautiful. Strongest in pursuit. We pursue passionatew...what we hold as the most dear...

Valentina: I am slightly disturbed to use this word" pursuit" in very high feelings; it is more like...how would I say...it's like flying through the transparent blue air. Pause But really soaring! And it's a great art Laughing to fly to the Beloved. In this sense only it is the pursuing. So you understand me? Softly No, you don't? Interrupting Herself... But what's the use of telling to the blind about the gold and pink colours?! I could spend with you

three more hours but alas, this won't make you the kind of lover I am telling you about. Pause

....Let us take the case of the great lover Ramakrishna. I always love his love! Well, he had periods when he was longing for the Divine Mother, when he was digging his face in the earth and weeping from bitter, bitter, sad separation! And there were moments when he was approaching Her and then the "pursuing" would be eased. Then the love was full, then he was getting fully, was bathing fully in the returned love. First he was giving love and crying for it, so there was no fulfillment. There was the returned love, but he had to have it more fully. Had it not been the return, it would have been no love at all. It was returned and he felt the Presence, but it was not full, not full yet, even in the case of such a lover and devotee as Ramakrishna. That is what I want to say.

It is not an easy thing to achieve a perfect, absolute mutuality, be it on the level of the Divine, be it on the level of the human. But without balance and mutuality there is no love, just be well assured of it! Just as you cannot throw out a word from the song, you cannot throw mutuality from love! It would be distortion. Pursueyes! Precisely because you foresee the splendour of perfect Unionyou are pursuing! Ardour does not come cheaply and not with everybody. It is a rare jewel. It is a jewel on whatever level. That's what it would be. (Pause)...1 admire Emerson's precision and knowwhat. But this remark of Emerson, as well as my own feelings along these lines, refers to the realms of forces and their play...even in Ramakrishna's tears for Mother.

when we realize, not love as love, but God as Love. Then Ramakrishna really saw Love as his very Essence! Truth became His Body, and the very Light turned into the Shadow of God! Then...then there is no more pursuing! He simply, very humbly and very peacefully stood and let the Mother do. And why Ramakrishna? Because when I speak of Ramakrishna I speak of Love...

....Let's meditate upon Love. Love, a conscious Force, the Force which is floating around you but you do not accept it. It is knocking into your hearts, but you do not hear it. If you open yourself, you will catch it. It will straighten all the crooked corners within you, I promise it will. It helps to see things in a different light altogether. Everything becomes bright, clear when consciousness is heightened within you and when the consciousness of Love is catching you. It is God's Force!... [Musingly] Why are people so dull? (Softly/ Because they are not in love What they call love is a cartoon! And yet even the cartoon is borrowed from that Forcel It is a very beautiful Force. It makes everything standable,

everything very clear and joyous. And when you are in love with that Love Force, it is easy then to dedicate yourself to Sadhana, for you are backed by one...secret thought. Mind you, it is a secret! If you have it, please keep it a secret.

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In order to understand the Call of Krishna, which is not all that allegorical in order to understand it, you have to change. You have to change yourself! And it is very challenging as well as very difficult. I cannot but think about the classical statement of Christ: "Many are called but few are chosen." So the Lord Krishna is calling every single human being, but the choice is made by man himself. The Divine never chooses; He never has any preferences, but man determines his destiny himself. And mostly man refuses to be chosen; that is the paradox and that is the tragedy of human evolution. Man knows not about his potential and does not want to sacrifice in order to invoke this potential. Well, that explains why so very few people are fit for Spiritual Path. Not because the Divine does not want them but because they do no want the Divine!

Student: Are there not, however, signs that many are hearing the Call? I'm thinking particularly about the growth and popularity of spiritual movements.

Valentina: If many subscribe to various spiritual movements, it absolutely means nothing; it does not amount to much; it does not mean that they want the Divine at all.

Man, usually, when he is interested in the esoteric Path, or Yoga, when he sees that he cannot continue in the obvious limitations of the formal creed, foolishly thinks that he, only because he made a decision, will immediately acquire some powers and will expand his knowledge. No, it is not all that cheap; it is not that easy. First of all, man has to understand that he does not understand, that he does not know at all. And that too, usually, if declared, is only a melodrama. It is not that. It is within yourself, between you and God. And from there starts your real work upon yourself. Know what you already have and what you do not yet have this is your first step. Then you have to know that you repeat and quote certain great slogans and admire great ideals, and yet neither understand nor possess them, which too is a dangerous stage. You have to know that toothat it is not to borrow the slogan, not to quote it, but to realize the Truth behind it. That means that in order to hear the Call of Krishna, you have to acquire certain qualificationsbut first honestly know that you still do not have them, yet you rejoice at them!!

Student: So the first step is to know our honesttogoodness worth and work on it?

Valentina: Yes, first develop that which you already possess, work on your good accumulations enlarge, expand them but simultaneously throw out the pride and the ambition; build your Temple within and wait till the Divine Guest will visit it.

Student: Guru, sometimes I fear that my purpose for being here is because of the outer charm, Your magnet, Your art and aesthetics. I feel I am carried awayI miss Your other tasks and aspects.

Valentina: You are quite right this certainly is not a place for only outer beauty. Make your perception unselfish; deepen it. You will have the transmutation of aesthetic impressions which is a guarantee for your growth! Just as your body grows, or in the case of people who are maturerenews itself, which is similar to growtheven so your mental capacity grows when you are prolonging the right impression and transmuting it into an experience. But what do we see mostly? You are only captivated; we have Satsang after Satsang, but then the influence of the world completely sweeps away your inspiration!

Student: Is that what You mean when You say that one has to change his being?

Valentina: Indeed! You ought to make it conscious, receptive, different, completely different. You have to understand that without such change there is no growth for you. And there is no evolution for most people. Nature does its part, but then man has to do his, and the Grace finishes the effort. But so far man is an unfinished symphony! Flowers are finished; beautiful and healthy and strong animals are finished in their evolutionsthey cannot go any more, they are just what they have achieved in their maximum. Whereas, man is a defective being. But man has great possibilities. Esoteric teachings tell us that new powers await us, and some (not all) Avataras show us how powerful and immortal in their body they are. So it is worthwhile the effort, is it not?

Student: Valentina, why should we feel ourselves defective? It hardly seems feasible to me that I am defective. Are we not created in the Image of God and thus perfect?

Valentina: Okay, reveal it, then we will believe it! [Laughter) You quoted the Bible that man is made in the Image of God, therefore is perfect. Yes, so he is. But it does not mean even for a moment that you are, in your outer personality, unto Him! Man, as he functions in his "mortal mind," is absolutely defective! Human, outer mind is not expanded. Human, lower vital is a perpetual showoff, full of ridiculous pretense; tense; human body is dense, tired quickly, gross, etc. Well...if you do not call such instrumentality defective and if you do not want to refine, heighten and spiritualize it (which means conquer it) then it is okay!!! Live "happily" in limitations. "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise!!!" But if you want to realize the Divine or at least to have a glimpse into It, then with all your might develop spiritual humility and, with an "eagle eye," watch the kicking of the lower nature! which, much as I would want to please you, I cannot call anything but defective.

Student: But aren't we better than the animal?

Valentina: Sometimes. [Laughter] A human being is an angel on one side, a beast on the other side, and a man in between. The rose is perfect. What else can be done to it? But man is in becoming and the examples of perfect men show us that man, in his present evolution, is defective. A perfect man is Buddha; a perfect man is Christ, and there are many who approach the Perfection. But at its average, humanity is very imperfectyou will probably agree.

Student: Not completely. I just can't believe that I am just a mere thing and defective at that. It seems so pessimistic.

Valentina: You are not a "thing." Be consoled! The point is that you are totally misconceiving the idea, my Child. You simply do not understand what I am talking about. I am not suggesting the pessimistic attitude, not even for one second. On the contrary, together with selfobservation there should be the strong faith in yourself; there should be great belief in yourself, but there should not be complacency. [Smiling) I shall not give you the pleasure of an argument, my Child, and I shall add that I do not attack a healthy selfconfidence but rather a sick smugness. Two entirely different things! One is to believe in your will, to believe in your abilities, to believe in your essential and potential spirituality and to discover it. Another is to assert your ego. One who wants purity should never assert his ego, yet should always be full of optimism and joy and cheerfulness and should rely on his inner capacity. But for relying, you have to discover that inner capacity; otherwise one is plunging into selfassertiveness, pride, opinionatedness and above all, into a very limited psychological field. Do you follow me?

Student: Yes, Guru, I think I do now.

Valentina: In other words, it is not to be "happygolucky," but it is to be cheerful and strong. This is different, entirely different. Happygolucky is an irresponsible living. Cheerfulness and strength is a very responsible life. Optimism does not imply the closing of your eyes like an ostrich. To be optimistic, in a broader sense, means to believe in good more than in bad. Well, that is very wonderfulto believe in ultimate victory of good over bad, yet to know that there is bad which you have to conquer. You believe in the good, but you do not close your eyes to the limitations. You see? Well, then you are okay. Then you are a mensch. You have to start to be a mensch first of all and then we expand it and become a spiritual man. But if we simply are displaying our coquetry and trying to be what we are not, or else are asserting ourselves in that which is not at all that admirable, then definitely we are not qualified.

Second student: Often we assume that we have changed so much! How can we be sure we are not deluding ourselves? That we really are becoming spiritual? Valentina: There are certain signs which show you that you are changing towards the spiritual and the certain signs which indicate that you are not changing. Now, the first sign which shows that you are progressing towards the subtle mentality is that you are developing your conscience, not consciousness only, but also conscience. You become very sensitive to evil and good. You shiver at committing something which offends Godliterally shiver. You just cannot do it. Also you are deeply ashamed at your past trespasses. And contrary to thatwhenever your being is merging into darkness, you lose shame. That is most significant! Man who goes astray simultaneously becomes shameless, callous. He does not even understand that he is burdensome to others, atrocious, offensive, gross! He does not understand it; he loses sensitivity to goodness. And by that you can go; you can tell yourself by that.

Of course, it presupposes a pretty high intelligence and ability to observethe selfobservation. You can observe others better than you can observe yourself. That is a very strange phenomenonman notices in another person everything which he himself has, but he does not notice it in himself. Mostly only weakness is observed in others because man is well familiar with them in himself, yet he aggrandizes himself and attributes his own defects only to others. By the same token, whenever man has a lofty character or much talenthe immediately recognizes such in greater than himself. That is

why I told you if you want to notice who is Krishna, you have to change yourself to a certain degree (at least!) which would bring you closer to certain qualities of Krishna.

Student: Guru, for thousands of years the great Souls have called us to Truth, yet all is distorted. Speaking very locally, even to Your most holy Ashram, distorters are attracted. Why is this, Guru?

Valentina: [Smiling) Well, it sure enough is the pattern! You see, this whole universe, manifested universe, is functioning in ignorance, is subject to Maya. That is why those paradoxes are happening. That is why the whole thing is so extremely uneven, unharmonious and absurd. Had the world been functioning in Wisdom and Truth and not in Ignorance, then a place like this would attract only the suitable people and the life in the Ashram would be progressing and would be going towards Light uninterruptedly. There would be no such thing as crucifixion of Christ, for that matter! There would be no such thing as indescribable sufferings of Buddha. Speaking locally, as you say, there would be no distortion of Swami Sivananda, and ad infinitum! But alas!this world is functioning in Ignorance, hence it is always the asuric tendency to dis. tort everything, to influence everything in the wrong way. The wrong way is a strange way; it is a strange way of Ignorance, you see? And we, on this planet, are much more connected with the asuric plane than with the devaic plane. Well, that is "how"; it explains the whole thing. [Pause]

That is why not a single Avatara could change this world. The enlightened ones could give their lives; they could create their disciples and they could promote this world from one cycle to another, but they did not establish Truth on earth. The world as it is now is obviously deprived of Truth; there is no such thing as living in Truth. We all know it that the world is false; it is a liar and you become a liar when you mingle with the world. It surely takes a Herculean effort to overcome all these obstacles and to go into Nirvana and to say goodbye to the whole madness...or else to sacrifice yourself into the madness.

Student: But it is hopelessness!

Valentina: No. Thousand times no! Each cycle comes somewhat closer to the Divine. I bow to...the "somewhat"...

Another student: It seems we are either influenced by the lower or the higher. Is there no such thing as the neutral field?

Valentina: What do you mean by the "neutral field?" The state where you are not influenced?

Student: Yes.

Valentina: There is such state but...then you are either dead or on the much higher planet! If you are here and alive, you are always responding to vibrations. You cannot think that influence is necessarily a compellingbyforce! It is just exchange of vibrationeither you respond to one kind or to another! Now, it happens to be that earth plane is a very tasty morsel for what is called "asuras" because there is a tremendous response to their projections. You know very well in common life, when there is demand, there is also supply; when there is a need, there is an answer to it. Well, it is the same thing with the Cosmic situation! That which is of affinity to something is influenced by that something, is attracted to that something and consequently becomes that something.

There is an opposition to Light in asuric mentality; asuric plane is a mental plane and humanity is, in its highest evolution, on the mental level, but not yet on the spiritual. So there is an enormous responseI cannot put it otherwise. That is why there is submission to dark influence. and the opposite influence, the Divine influence, is rather remote, removed, for It also operates only when there is demand for It. The asuric influence is very quickly felt and accepted because man's nature is on that level. If, for instance, the earth plane would raise its vibration to such an extent that it would become foreign to the asuric plane, then what would happen to the asuric plane? It probably would completely lose its potencythere is no demand for it! It would either disappear or become undisturbing; it would not reach this plane. This plane would not be any longer for the asuric plane such a tasty morsel! They would not want to reign here because they are defeated; they are out of job! But because there is on earth a tremendous response and affinity to the dark force, we have what we have. We have that kind of misery and that kind of strife and that kind of horrible civilization.

Student: Valentina, You speak of the "asuric plane" is it what the Christian calls "Satanic?" Being unfamiliar with this terminology could You please elucidate? Second student: Is it not superstitious to believe in the Asuras?!

Valentina: [Turning to the first student] Yes, it is similar to Christian concept. [To the second] Definitely there is such thing as the opposition to Rightness, harmony, Truthyou don't have to call it "Asuric" or "Satanic" if your mentality is too "advanced" and "modern" for such oldfashioned terminology. Just observe and decide for yourself. I do not want to force the Puranas or the Bible upon you; I am neither a Pundit nor am I Savanarola who threatens with the burning Hell! But I know what I know. And to be aware of the plane of dark, ignorant forces is indeed not a superstition.

Third student:

Please do elucidate!

Valentina: You won't accuse me of malpreaching, will you?! [Loud laughter]

Student: I shall prostrate to you!

Valentina: I'm not much for the outer prostrations. Well, just be open and unprejudiced. Do not fall into sentimentalization and maudlin nonsense, all kinds of melodrama, but observe, and with all your integrity admit that there is a turn in you which is predominant and it is the pull towards the easy directioneasy, yes, to fall to the level of the masses, rather than to raise to the level of the saint, this is the easy, the low wayand it is a natural pull. The raising to the higher level is unnatural, therefore it is a difficult way, a high Way. [Silence]

Second student: what does it mean concretely?

Valentina: It shows that man is in the state of consciousness which corresponds very much more to the undivine than to the Divine. The Asuras correspond to all human weakness. That is why it is easier for man to follow the asuric pull than to hear the Divine Call, because the Asuras only flatter man and prompt him to do the things which his lower nature wants very much. Whenever there is a temptation, whenever there is a desire of the lower nature, whenever there is arrogance or whenever there is selfassertiveness, know for sure that you are the instrument of the asuric will. The asuric will is very strong

and the human will is very weak. So the asuric will plus human consent gives the rotten humanity!1

[Turning to the second student]

Ihope you now understand that for a person who is inwardly developed the Asuras and the Devas are not even in the least the fairytale! It is a Cosmic Fact! (Although the fairytale can also be the fact but now I am referring to the fairy. tale as an idle imagination.) No, this is not an idle imagination. All the scrip. tures reveal it to you, but especially the Devi Mahatmayam and the Skanda Puranas where it is said so precisely, so picturesquely and so emphatically that the Asuras are strong, sometimes even very gifted, sometimes are even interested in austerities; they can propitiate the gods even through Mantra, trough sacrificial rites, vows, etc. There are also among them, of course, those who are entirely monstrous and without any qualities. The ones I described are also monstrous but with qualities!

As you remember in Devi Mahatmayam, Sumbha is described as the magnificent specimen with eight unsurpassable, powerful arms and with the light around him, and even his shield and his sword emanated luminosity! So they are the strong beings but they are not the friends of Light! By that go and by that know! that the human civilization is precisely not the friend of Light because it is under the pull, the push and the influence of the Asuric Kingdom!

Student: I heard about the Hierarchy of Light and of Darkness. Is that what You are now describing the dark hierarchy?

Valentina: You can call it so! Asuras have various servants. The Dark Kingdom consists of Asuras which reign on the mental plane; Rakshasas which reign on the vital plane; and Pishachas which reign on the vitalphysical. Well, Asuras are talented at times (do not please think that all of them are, not all are Sumbha and Nisumbha! most are with horns and tails [Smiling) and all other accessories which theologians term as "little devils," but still some are attractive and real powerful). But the socalled Rakshasas are totally devoid of handsomeness; they are reigning on the lower planes and are real horrible ones! They are really the "mugs" and with dreadful bodies all covered up with furs and with all typical characteristicsknown precisely as the classical devil. These, it is said, are in charge of gross desire, of exceedingly ugly desire! And as to the Pishachas they are on the

physicallow astral, the lowest stratareally the monstrosities! So you can well imagine under what influence is human, untrained mind and poor, uncontrolled emotions.

...Please know that the devil can very well quote the scriptures, can very well perform the austerities (I just told you about it), can very well imitate the Light, but [Intensely) "By their fruit ye shall know them!" One thing the dark ones do not have is humility; another thing they do not have is devotion; the third thing they do not have is purity; the fourth thing they do not have is unselfishness. They, in their stupidity (all of them, by the way, are totally stupid), think that they are performing austerities. But rally and truly, could their practices be called austerities? Austerities are austerities only if one who performs them is pure and selfless, but if one has in view some bargain, one is unclean. Such one is precisely diabolical. So by that you can tell.

You an also tell (if you are at all honest) that in you there are movements which correspond to the peculiarities of the Asuras. That is why the Dark Force can choose almost any human being from the field of art or religion, down to business, family and whatnotAsuras have full audience, very attentive listeners...

...Also their very emphatic peculiarity is that they are not faithful! There is not a single Asura [Smiling] on whom I would rely! I, by the way, trust not many people, only very, very few. In human society it is very interesting to watch how people can be evaluated by either devotion or betrayal.

Student: So categorically? Devotion or betrayal?

Valentina: Yes, paradoxical enough but so it is! If not betrayal, there definitely is a tendency to betray lack of loyalty, faithfulness, reliabilityby that also know. If you have within yourself the divine qualities, you are devoted. If you have "asuric ingredients," you are never devoted. You are always fluctuating, you cannot be onepointed, you hardly ever can concentrate. You belong to everybody and nobody, but above all, you are everready to betray the Cause. You cannot help it; you are Asura; it is your nature... if, of course, it is!1 [Laughing] Of course it is not, but I mean if it is. Do you see? I hope it is clearer now.

Student: Yes, it is very clear. And I still think I should prostrate to You.

Valentina: Please don't trouble yourselfjust make yourself a reliable, real man, that is more than any prostration!

Student: Ishall. Please, what about the Devas?!

Valentina: [Smiling/ They will help you to be aright if you really attract their attention! Devas are the coworkers, the adorers, the admirers, and the followers of God. You mentioned the Hierarchy of Light. Well, that is what it is. The Bible calls it the "Ladder of Jacob." These are angelic forces, but they are removed from human society, from human body, from human manifestation by the Asuras. The Devas are far up, Asuras in the middle and human beings at the bottom (in the manifested physical realm, I am talking about). Therefore, when the Devas are trying to give you the signal, the Call of God is caught by the radio of the Asuras! They have their radio stations in every corner; they catch it; they will not let it go through unless you have your own radio apparatus and tune into the Call of Devas.

Student: Can I tell that I hear and do not imagine the Call of the Devas, the Call, or Krishna?

Valentina: The Lord, through His instrumentalities, calls you to change yourself! And the Asuras, through their instrumentalities, call you to be what you are and flatter you, and help you to assert yourself and to justify yourself and to always be able to say, "Well, I'm not so bad after all," or "Don't I have a right?!" And by that know. whenever you have a desire to say, "Well, can't I live my own life? Can't I express myself? Can't I do this, that and that? Shouldn't I fulfill my desire?" know for sure that quite a big, big queue of the Asuras is whispering in your ear. And it is so very easy to listen to them because they are flattering to your lower nature, because they are actually compelling you to fall into their paws, to be their slaves.

Whereas, the Call of the Divine is very, very opposite, different. Krishna tells you, "Man, if you want to come to Me, immediately change your nature! For! cannot receive you and you will not be able to reach Me if you will come to Me the way you are. You will be scorched; you will be burned in toto, for our vibrations are different." So by that know. Whenever you feel within yourself the wave of the acutest repentance, response to purification, to humility, to austerity, to silence, above all to sacrifice, to crucifixion of your vanity, know for sure you have heard the Call.

Student: Guru, what You now said so intensely was one of the most incredible projections! The really cosmic state of affairs! It is extreme enlightening yet very frightening.

Valentina: I will tell you something. Instead of being scared and instead of lamenting and being despondent, just love the opposite of the Asuras; that is how you attract the influence of God. Love beauty with all your might; love virtue with all your might; love life as a possibility to evolve; love creation; love everything which is lovely. Then you will not attract that which is unlovely. That is the remedy and that is the only way; there is no other way.

KRISHNA JAYANTI

August 29, 1975

[Midnight in the Garden)

Valentina: In this late hour of the night of the Lord Krishnahow blessed we are in the fragrance of our Garden! It seems that everything praises Him in extra intense manner. The cactuses open their lips and eyes only to greet the Owner of their lives even if the life lasts five minutes! The roses. The jasmines. These trees all praise, praise and give their prana to the Adorable Musician of all hearts!!

The best way to remember the man is through his sayings. What a man says, that he usually thinks. Even a hypocrite sooner or later introduces himself as a hypocrite through his false tongue! The best way to remember God is through the sayings of His Incarnations..."I am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings," says the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita. It is said that he who can meditate upon that, not theoretically, but truly, with all his being, he becomes unto the Lord.

The next best is to meditate upon the Lord manifested in the highest and in the strongest and in the purest. The Lord continues to elaborate upon His Splendour. "Among the Adityas I am Vishnu." The Lord manifests as the leading deity amongst the Adityas or the

group of twelve gods. And He enumerates various gods, angels, all kinds of human and subhuman beings, and stresses that the chief of every class, the strongest and most great, is a special manifestation of Godhead. "I am Skanda among the generals. Amongst RudrrasI am Siva. Of purifiersI am the wind, of warriorsI am Rama. Of LettersI am the Letter A. Of PandavasI am Arjuna. I am the vigour of the strong; I even am the gambling of the cheats (whatever of Sakti, even if distorted, comes from the Lord!)I am Victory, I am Effort, I am the quality of Sattwa in the pure! I am the unborn, the allpervading Origin of all My endless incarnationsthe beginning, the support as well as dissolution! Even the highest manifested powers are only a portion of My True Glory! Among al the Cosmic gods, all the humans, superhumans as well as subhumans, I am the leader, the best among their best! Himalaya amongst mountains, Ganga amongst rivers, I am Springthe fairest of the seasons! Among men I am the greatest sages, yogins, the great seers, the kindled poets. Worship Me in whatever of My greatness! I am in everything, but I manifest Myself best in the strongest, purest and most beautiful. Whatever victorious, perfect and intensely convincing creature there is among men and above men1 am their splendour. If you worship My special Powers you are only worshiping Me. I support this whole Universe only with a spark of My Glory. I am eternal, immeasurable! There is no end of My Divine Manifestations, I told you only parts of them! I am the Resplendent, the strongest, the most powerful in whatever form." Glorious?! "Whatsoever is lovely" that am I.

But the highest meditation is [Intensely] "I am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings" meaning that there is not a single one who does not have the spark of the Divinethat by the power of the Divine the whole universe is sus tained. This is awesome to think about, and this is what Krishna was stressing. Many, many wonderful things He was stressing and bringing, and we will not elucidate upon it at this midnight hour of His birth, but we will praise Him.

[Holy Mother chants the Maha Mantra] [Silence]

Rama and Krishna are the same Incarnations of Vishnu. Therefore, that sixteen worded Mantra describes the Splendour of the Protector God (Vishnu standing for the protecting aspect).

And now I am praying that this Mantra may protect all of you and the whole world. It is an auspicious hour, it is a very great hour. [Maha Mantra and Japa follow]

...Now please join me in the prayer of gratitude. It is indeed a tremendous boon to be here at midnight and the whole night in the Name of God! 1 It is really a great, great privilege! It is a great privilege in that you give yourself a chance to transcend your nature, to remember the Divine concretely, to purify yourself in the very accelerated time. What is in ordinary way requiring many, many years, a concentrated prayer in the night of Krishna can do within an hour, for the vibrations are very high, the concept of the Divinity is in the heart of everybody by the Grace of the Divinity, and so we are first of all uniting in the profoundest gratitude to the Divine. There is no greater beauty than to pray for the sake of the divine and not for the sake of the human need. Just pray in gratitude that you remember the Divine! You do not want anything. You just adore! "God, I am here to remember Thee!"that's the greatest! [Japa follows]

This was my first prayerthe prayer of praise and profound gratitudeand the second one is the prayer for the world, for everything which has breath in its nostrils, which, what or who everything!man, beast, plant! Japa follows]

My third prayer is... [With slight hesitation]...for those who trespass against me. When I say "trespass against me" I don't mean ValentinaI mean the Truth! I pray for those who trespass against the Truth; I pray for them, for their Karma is not too handsome. I pray for them. [Japa follows]

This is my fourth prayereven as Arjuna, we are praying to the Lord to forgive our trespasses against His Love...our forgetfulness of God, the lack of aspiration, the lack of the Eightfold virtues, to forgive the offenses. However, I consider this prayer a repentance which should not be prolonged; unless felt very deeply, it is a poor prayer, as every apology is! Never apologize in life and in prayer; prevent the necessity of saying, "Oh, I am so sorry!" Hence, we shall follow this "I am sorry, Lord" with a more noble prayer: "Lord, give us power not to offend Thee." and the power is called Sadhana Sakti. Here comes the Mother! She is in charge of Sadhana Sakti. Om Sakti! Om Devi! Om Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati and every aspect of the Divine Mother! [Valentina chants charmingly the Names of the Divine Mother]

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[The music of Johann Sebastian Bach's "Sonata for Flute in G Minor" is played) The same flute is going to call you all the time! You have only two days of Krishna month left...And

then comes a new month. In that glorious month of August you had to give yourself an account whether you took it seriously or halfheartedly; how much respect to the Call did you have? Did you hear the Call when you were ready to go astray in whatever minutest degree? If you did hear the Flute and caught yourself in time, May God bless you, you really did a good job! If you did not, here is your chance to repent, to prostrate, to adore, to invoke, to listen, to hear the Call! Do not relax your efforts, do not be sorry that you do not sleep the nightthat is nonsense! But be ready to receive the Call, for you have only two days left and that is serious; that is the vibration of Krishna now. Relax gratefully and hear the Call and be blessed.

[After relaxing practices]

...And we shall conclude (although I wish we would not have to conclude and could stay here till sunrise, but I have mercy upon you!. [Laughter] so we shall conclude with the pranayama indicated in the Bhagavad Gita when the Lord is describing various Yogis who practice the Divine Yoga in His Name. And some, He says, offer the breath to the Lord; this is a form of Yogathe ingoing breath and the outgoing breath is offered to the Lord. In other words, when we breathe in, we give our whole being to the Supreme; when we breathe out, we concentrate on the breath with gratitude; we think about the Divine who sustains this breath. Breath is life. Therefore, it means we dedicate our life to God. Each breath you give to Krishna.

And now, Jay, please takethese Krishna carnations [Indicating a beautiful large arrangement of blue tintedflowers in front of Her asana table) the blue ones, and take them out and give them tothose who you think will love them most!1 Keep one for brother Jack! Is he here? Jack?! Jackis "slaving" at this moment, so I say a prayer for him and for those who were not able tocome here due to circumstances. and I thank those who could come due to your goodcircumstances and sometimes in spite of your bad circumstances. Om Sakti.God bless you. Thank you. Good night!

SEPTEMBER

Let us say adieu to the glorious August; throughout this month the Call of Krishna was to raise you from matter to Spirit. In proportion that you could use your consciousness idealistically and not materialisticallyin that proportion you heard the Call of the Divine. It is not to ignore the mundane but to master itthat is the Call. And that is possible when you are entertaining lofty ideas every day, and not theoretically, but practically. When it becomes your bread, then you are hearing the Call. So gratefully, solemnly and simply we are bowing to that call which always should be the substratum of our lives. Hear, those who have the ears!

...The Lord Krishna was calling you to what? To Truth and Freedom. When we hear the Call we entertain simultaneously the longing for the true values and the freedom from sin, disease and death. So let this month be called Freedom!

Student: Guru, this word "freedom"it is so popular today; everybody says they want to be "free." Could Guru please elaborate?

Valentina: Indeed, freedom when contemplated and meditated by a Sage is one concept, when contemplated by an honest but unspiritual man is quite a bit another concept, and when thought carelessly by the carnal man is an abused concept!

Second student: We can sure see how this freedom now is taken by the average American and where it leads when abused.

Valentina: True! There is much abuse of freedom. The laissezfaire is taken for freedom! And the abuse of freedom is tragic. It results in very evil Karma. Everything is "freedom" for the fool who justifies his foolishness, arrogance and laissezfaire...I foresee questions, but really it is so clear and so axiomatic that to elaborate upon it is not necessary!

Third student: It is hard to think objectively, as we Americans are mighty proud of our freedom and civilization!

Valentina: That makes me think about what Gurudev Sivananda so often used to say about modern civilization. He, for instance, would stress that our days are only the socalled "civilization," indeed removed from real freedom and culture. How can, says Swami Sivananda, there be real culture if greed, passion, selfishness and lust are increasing day by day, hour by hour?! Man, indeed, has lost his manliness. And what is worse, every man feels himself an authority; no one wants to improve, to submit to authority! "Everyone feels himself a Guru!"

First student: I am particularly struck that every man feels himself an authority; it is so characteristic in all fields of life.

Valentina: Yes, everyone asserts his authority; few can submit to the authority. Gurudev said it so well!that "the ignorant man thinks it is beneath his dignity and against his freedom to submit to somebody's command. This is a great blunder," he said. Unless you went through intense disciplines and had sincere Guru Bhakti in some periods of your "spiritual career", how can you you reflect carefully, you will see that your individual freedom is in reality an ever have any real character, humility or knowledge?! Continues Gurudev, "If absolutely abject slavery to your own ego, your own vanity. It is the vagaries of the sensual mind. He who attains victory over the mind and the ego is the hero. It is to attain this victory that man submits to higher spiritualized per sonality of the Guru. By this submission he vanquishes his lower ego and realizes the bliss of Infinite Consciousness."

Student: Guru, what You, for the most part, have told us about is the fool's freedomhow about more of the Sage?

Valentina: But...didn't I just quote Sivananda's concept of freedom?!

Student: Yes, indeed, this somewhat illustrates how the wise man should feel, but I want You to pinpoint and I want to feel Your views more!

Valentina: Let us start with the man who is on the path towards freedoma thinking man. Well, freedom as the freedom of conscious will is the freedom of the wise! The fool's freedom is often attributed to the "free will" too. But at close investigation it is more than evident that there is not a trace of the real will or, for that matter, choice, there is desire to be expressed only. Willfulness, arrogance, possessiveness, dictatorship often parade

as "free will." The sage smiles at such "will." There is freedom of will only for a prudent man, for reasoning man. True, there is a great "determinism" in Nature and it is difficult to say where the free will ends or where it begins. Nevertheless, there is definitely a turn towards a choice, towards the ability to discriminate in man who is somewhat above the mentality of an orangutan! The freedom to do wrong is even below the orangutan!

As to the Sage, he contemplates freedom as the Supreme Powerthe One Eternal who is above all, who, when realized, changes the life of man, gives him true freedom, through union with Itself. That happens only when one frees himself, really frees himself, from slavery to nature. Nature actually is that which you make out of it. The Sages use nature; the savage is used by nature and the "civilized man" is not at all superior to the savage. Even the scholar "shames us by his bifold life." the usual mentality of practically the whole mankind. This mentality does not What the Bhagavad Gita calls deluded or ignorant or unspiritual constitutes perceive the Divine either within or outside regardless how many books are read or how many lectures heard. Does it mean that it is totally impossible for the materialistic man to turn to God? No, it is not totally impossible. The peo. ple who do not have the natural affinity with inner life at least have to know that it is, as I often say, business with God. It is not just the idle talk, the idle curiosity, the idle competition or the idle imagination. It is real and very seri. ous endeavour. If the worldly man at least has sufficient respect to the values which he does not yet understand, he starts the deepening of his mentality. Student: Could You please concretely tell me from the Western point of view what precisely enslaves us and keeps us away from freedom?

Valentina: In your own Scriptures, Western Scriptures, it is said that there are seven deadly sins which take you away from freedom. The most paramount of all sins is considered, by the way, pride. It is always put as the most potent of all the cardinal sins. Pride. "He that is proudeats up himself; pride is his glass, his trumpet, his chronicle, and whatever praises itself by the deeddevours itself by selfpraise." Better than ShakespeareI can't!

The second one is covetousness which is similar to acquisitiveness or avariciousness or greed; it has also many connotations. It is considered a deadly sin.

Then, of course, well known to everybodylust, that's for sure. So long as lust (for whatever!) smells good in our nostrils, we smell bad for the divine!

Lust is the cardinal sin which one should fear most. Lust deprives the senses and makes man a beggar. Lust is the greatest enemy of the Divine Law. And then, of course, envy is that green monster, the snake, which devours your vitality, your wellbeing, your peace and your sense of justice.

Another deadly sin is gluttonyvery objectionable indeed. And gluttony is not only physically loading yourself with drink and food, but one can be a glutton psychologically tooliterally, the lack of control in food, in other sensual pleasures too, but food mostly.

And the sixth one is sloth, laziness, inability to D.I.N., or do it now, to fulfill things, to be alert, the Tamasic procrastination.

The seventh one is anger. Indeed a deadly sin and a very "impotent passion!" Anger begins in folly and ends in repentance according to ancient wisdom. And Emerson: "Man makes his inferiors his superiors through his anger!" (Turning to the student] Well, is it clearer only because "the Bible said so?"

Student: Maybe I am very childish, but really, it is clearer than when You speak so ardently of the Bhagavad Gita!

Valentina: [Laughs) Well, it is not at all a bad idea to translate facts into native language! Bread is bread, but if I shall call it in other languages, you perhaps will forget the purpose of it. Eat your bread and be wellcall it any name you understand best.

Student: I understand best what You just so well explained that the deadly sins make me a bankrupt.

Valentina: Good so. Don't poison your "bread." Think about the danger and quickly eliminate the poison. One has to get rid of those deadly sins first before one can hope to be able to meditate and lead an intensely heightened inner life. Without such inwardness it is impossible to realize God. So the first thing (I now put into your parlance!), the first step is to remove those deadly sins! And in Raja Yoga it is called Yama and Niyamathe eradication of the deadly sins and the cultivation of the virtues.

Student: Please help me to make my bread real good!

Valentina: Well, let us dwell on the cardinal virtues, your strength, the bread of your life! In fact, take any kind of a virtue, whatever one is fond of most,it will secure your freedom!

There are four cardinal virtues and then the three were added later on by the modern western thinkers. The first cardinal virtue, you might remember it, is considered Prudence! And then there is such thing as Temperance, then Justice, and the fourth one is Fortitude, which is also forbearance, endurance. Prudence is an ingredient of Mindfulness. The essence of Prudence is of a prohibitive nature: "Thou shalt not"... And, of course, this abstinence and control vary according to intelligence and development of man. There is nothing more annoying than a prudent fool or coward, for he will, in his caution, abstain even from a good deed or word and will call it prudence! But an intelligent prudence is a delight for the one who has it and those who witness it. A wise man, for instance, uses prudence as decorum and is silent when it is better to be silent than to say a careless word which can bear grave consequences. By the same token, he may boldly say a very dangerous (for his popularity!) word out of the same prudence, mind you! For in the long run it would prove very unprudential not to say the daring word! Thus, prudence is not an ordinary caution, but it indeed is what the Lord, Sri Krishna, called "skill in action." It is a special sagacity in the management and the adjustment of life. Quick quality. Good virtue the cardinal one!

Temperance is a control, is a general control and measure, not only in your physical body but in your mental body; it is measure. It is aloofness from everything which is none of your business, which is ugly, unsightly, inappropriate for the person who wants Perfection. Temperancevery fine quality. So is Fortitude. It is to be able to stand any kind of an obstacle bravely. Very fine, is it not? It is also a backbone.

According to the Scriptures, Justice is also one of those cardinal virtues. Take it philosophically and see how very, very horrible it is not to have justice, not to give the right tribute to the right endeavour or to the right achievement or to the right person or whatever.

Student: How about justice to the evil doers?

Valentina: That is a very appropriate question. I was hoping for it while eulogizing justice to the good man. Well, it seems to me that I cannot improve on Confucius, just as I cannot improve on Shakespeare. According to the old sage: "Good for good, but for the evilJustice." and by justice to the evil he certainly doesn't mean a pat on the back. [Pause)

Student: Wow! That's something! You mentioned also the added virtues?

Valentina: The added ones are Faith, Hope and Love. In Russian they are called Vera, Nadejda, Lubov Faith, Hope, Love; these are given as the female names. September 17th is the trionamesday and Russians have much rever. ence to Namesdays and elaborately celebrate them and honour the immenninieck the "namesdayer!" Not that one lives up to his great namebut this is quite another chapter.

... You are to cultivate your virtues not because you are rewarded, and avoid your sins not because you are punished, but because you are even as the artist who loves the cultivation of beauty for beauty's sake and eradication of dissonances for its own sake, just because it is rrright to be like so. Well, when one is equipped with some background of a clearcut thought, when one is totally set, then only one can consider the concept of Freedom. Otherwise, of course, my Children, it is just a handsome talk. I am now stressing it because these many days of September are dedicated to the contemplation on Freedom, the most noble idea which we have to cultivate, love, strive towards. But the price is high! And it has to be paid.

You cannot expect any result from anything without practicewhat an axiom! But at times it is helpful to speak in truisms, and that is what I allowed myself now. There is no such thing as getting something without putting into it something. You have to pay! Now, the payment for freedom is the struggle against slavery. The methods are many! Make your authority the Bible or the Bhagavad Gita. Choose and follow...

...And before we shall start our silence, please ponder upon what you perceive as Perfection and what you would like to know as total freedom from sin. Sin is the opposite of Perfection: it is falsehood and you want to be free from it. Freedom leads to Perfection. Don't think about sin; think about Freedom!

Student: It is unusual to hear the word "sin" from You.

Valentina: But you don't hear it from me. You hear about sin as falsehood. I don't harp on it; I mention it only as a faux pas, a false step. So, after all, I am true to myself. I don't entertain your topics! (Laughter]

Sin is falsehood. It is just the wrongly directed emotion. Whenever you're confronted by the sin of yours or of the world or of another man or of the situation, think about it as falsehood.

Student: How do we fight falsehood manifested as sin?

Valentina: By declaring that it is falsehood, that it has no power. You can touch it if necessary in the sense that Jesus touched the leper in order to heal him. He knew that it is the leper, but He did not think that it is right to be the leper! Jesus would say, "This is not right, this is a falsehood. I don't believe it; I don't accept it. There is no such thing as deformity in the Perfection of God. Go and be whole." [Pause] He did not think that this is the true stage of man, and therefore He could heal him, provided the leper thought the same. Here is the great, great pointprovided the leper thinks the same. If the leper thinks that his condition is inevitable and that it is not false, then Jesus cannot cure himimpossible! It takes twothe sinner and the Lordto declare that falsehood is falsehood. Short silence] Do you remember, there were ten lepers? Do you remember?

Student: No, I do not know it.

Valentina: Well there were, and only one turned to thank Him. [Short silence]

...Falsehood is not real, for only Truth is real. Falsehood cannot be real. It is a non persona grata. It appears as negative existence.

Student: What makes this negative existence, what gives life to it?

Valentina: The apparent life is given through the misdirected energy.

Student: Only the misdirected energy? Say something more about that! It sounds very encouraging!

Valentina: Encouraging to what? To sin and to misdirecting the energy?! [Laughter] What Isaid is so obvious that I wonder what more can be said.

Student: Something more about evil, my specialty!

Valentina: Poor specialty! For every evil (whatever, in whatever form), let it be addiction, let it be even a crime, let it be a diseaseit is the effect of something, is it not? It is not really the power as such. It is the effect of some misdirected power. All right, so if it is the effect, it is removable by the greater power. [Turning to the student) And in what is the greater power?

Student: The greater power is in some good deed, I suppose.

Valentina: It is the thought behind the deed. The good deed and the bad deed may appear similar, but it is the motive behind which makes the deed. The knife in itself is just the instrument, is it not? In the hands of the surgeon it is performing something good promoting the life; in the hands of the murderer it is performing something horribletaking away the life. So it is obviously not the knife of the surgeon and not the knife of the murderer which is a criminal deed, but it is...the psychic energy behind the knife. When the surgeon uses his knife, it is the correctly directed energy. When the murderer uses his, it is the misdirected energy.

Student: Shouldn't one have great faith in the Divine which can remove falsehood?

Valentina: Precisely. But in the case of the neophyte it is a gradual change. Don't hurry God, but become less and less afraid of all those dreadful things which surround you for they are not of God's Will which is the Absolute Benevolence.

Second student: But if only Truth is real, why do we suffer?

Valentina: This is a new chapter, sir; has nothing to do with the previous thoughts, but I am pretty sure you know about the Law of Cause and Effect, don't you? And that's the answer to your question.

Sometimes a man is literally a victim of his previous bad deeds, and therefore, without any seeming reason, he is in the most deplorable situation physically, mentally and spiritually! Supposing man is moral and good now but was vicious in his previous life. He goes through very terrible turmoil all the time, all kinds of obstacles and all that.

The Law of Karma, the Law of Cause and Effect, is merciless, as you all know, mathematical, precise! Whatever you do comes back to you. Whatever you think results in some word and in some deed which in turn produces some effect which influences your life. It is a big chain of cause and effect which is very, very difficult to overcome. All our suffering is the effect, the result of some misdirected energy.

Third student: Guru, what is the way out of this Karmic bind?

Valentina: Knowledge! Unless you are deeply disappointed, deeply hurt by that life in Ignorance, unless you start to rebel against that terrible slavery to the evil forces within you, you are in the rut, in the neverending Samsara.

Usually one is either shaken by the humiliation of meaningless human life or is inspired by something which surpasses it, surpasses infinitely. In both cases you turn to Truth and your life is changed dramatically. Not that the great effort is not involved, but the very effort becomes the song.

Student: Concretely how to start coming to Truth?

Valentina: A new attitude of mind is required, completely new attitude of mind. It requires protracted Sadhana, protracted meditation upon God as the only Power, which can neutralize all the lesser powers the powers of the Cause and Effect included. It is not at all easy to change your mentality. It is Supreme who is above the dualities, above the good and the evil. But when you not at all easy to start meditating day after day and night after

night upon the are all the time appealing to that ONE, you sort of pronounce everything else the lesser power, as the halftruth, and thus you establish the new Will, the One concentrated Force within yourself. It is very difficult but this is the only way to Truth or Peace that passes all understanding...

Rosh Hashanah

September 6, 1975

Student: Your call to Freedom, Guru, is sure enough very strong! How can I be sure to benefit from Your projections and remain a "good Jew?"I mean the approach of High Holidays now.

Valentina: Put the "Call for freedom" into the Rosh Hashanah! It deals precisely with that same freedom from corruption and culminates in Yom Kippur, a tremendous purifier.

Student: How can we be sure that we observe the Rosh Hashanah in the right spirit?

Valentina: Deepen yourself, make yourself more serious, make your self more inward, you will have the right spirit! These observances are really high! And for whom? Precisely for the deep man only!

There is the aspect of the Divine in Rosh Hashanah and there is an element of human, as everywhere else. Judaism in its Divine aspect is glorious and awesome; in its human aspect it indeed is not much, for it is taking that tremendous idea, rather, the Realization of the Jewish sages about the Oneness of God, and making it just a "Jewish God." And the faith of other men is not Jewish, therefore their 'God' is not good! Well, this is the human limitation; overcome it and you will have the divine Rosh Hashanah... [Silence]

Student: Isn't this same limiting force manifested in other religions as well,say, Christianity?

Valentina: The very replica! In its pristine glory, in its purity and beauty, Christianity is the religion also of One God. And when the Christian religion speaks of the Son and the Holy Ghost, it means only the aspects of the One. It means the tremendous Grace of the Divine which manifests Itself in Sonship that is to say, fullest relationship to the Divine, and the Divine Holy Ghost as the Divine Energy, the Sakti. But who knows about it? Ordinary Christian religionist takes it literally and says, "Well, the Jew doesn't believe in it, therefore he is not going to be saved because Christ would turn away from him." You see what idiocy! And so it goes.

Neither the Vedanta escaped the human pollution, nor the Tantra, nor Yoga! There is a Divine Vedanta and there is the human Vedanta just as there are these two elements in Judaism and Christianity. The Divine Vedanta speaks again about that only God, that only Power, the One, and takes the outer world as the "unreal," meaning that it is only the manifestation of the one awesome, mysterious, omnipresent Power of God and not the solid reality. But the lip Vedantin, the human distorter, takes Vedanta as something very gloomy and cheerless! The distorting Vedantin lands in pessimism, not in Wisdom, or else becomes callous and reveals total indifference to human beings. Or else it peculiar cynicism, as there was a Vedantin in the times of Sri reveals as a Ramakrishna who said, "Well, this world is unreal and therefore it is nothing at all objectionable if I will allow my physical body which also is not real to do what it wants! It is not real, why should I restrict it?! And so he preached and practiced absolute laissezfaire! Ramakrishna looked at him and said, "You know what? (1 spit at your Vedanta!" [All are silent)

Student: Valentina, what are Your feelings about the popular transcendental meditation courses? It seems helpful!?

Valentina: I came across quite a few who go to transcendental meditation in order to better their functioning in ordinary life! The socalled "transcendental meditation" is based precisely on the advertisement: "Here is the ancient elixir sold wholesale; it is a 'quickie. Come, the course consists of so many lessons. Preliminary two lectures will tell you all about what it is and guarantee: you will function better, you will make your perception more acute, you will relax and you will transcend..." and here I put many dots! Because what you will transcend [Laughing), the one who advertises it does not know himself! That is just the most paradoxical point about the whole thing!

Student: But some people I know tell me that they derive much relaxation out of these sessions!

Valentina: If you want to help yourself to relax better or to earn money better, know for sure that it is a folly to call your endeavours a transcendental meditation! Why not call it a Dale Carnegie course?! [All laugh] But indeed you cannot call it transcendental meditation, I hope it is clear even to a fool. If you call it "Dale Carnegie next degree" or perhaps somewhat similar to it, any kind of offshoot of the good Uncle Carnegie, then you are in the right, then you're an honest man, then you are not pretending anything! I gladly shake hands with Dale Carnegie because he does have his place. But the transcendental meditation, the way it is advertised and introduced, alas, does not have its place! For it is a gimmick, for it is a phony, for it is not right. they borrow the ancient idea and sell it wholesale without knowing what it is! And they achieve certain success because they provide the relaxation! But so does Dale Carnegie, who knows the psychology of a salesman very well and helps the salesman and the housewife and all other good people. But "transcendental salesmen" do not, because they pretend, and whoever pretends cannot help anything or anybody.

Student: Hey, it's great, I can become fulfilled in Dale Carnegie course. I sure belong there and nowhere else. Goodbye, Valentina!

Valentina: Zie gesund und stark, my kind. Go to Dale Carnegie and have a very good time. You are the first on my listmuch respect to you. All laugh

Second student: Seriously, Valentina, it seems that most people are fit just for Dale Carnegie. That's maximum of their morality and, further than that, few can or care to move.

Third student: It seems that all religions today serve little purpose.

Valentina: How can you say this? One has to be tolerant to human concepts of religions. they are doing good when and if they are not degenerating into almost subhuman mentality. Then, indeed, it is the end, the death of the spirit. when there is fanaticism, stupidity, dogmatism, etc. in the name of religion, it loses all human attributes and

becomes bestiality. But when man admits his limitations and acts according to his rung of evolution, trying to heighten the quality of his life through congregations; when he practices morality; when he goes from a little darkness to a little light, he is all right! Formal religions cannot lead from deep darkness to real Light, for they are functioning in human ignorance, but this stage is inevitable; for example, religion has its own divisions because every man has his own pet ideas and limitations. Why "divisions"?! Even endless subdivisions.

Student: Yes, don't we see it in ourselves and our families?! Is there no religion which has escaped this fragmentation?"

Valentina: It seems to me Hinduism is the only great religion which does not split and divide. In other words, in Hinduism there are no Catholics versus Protestants or reformative versus Orthodox, or evangelists versus the whole world even the three worlds! Instead there is manifoldness: various aspects, but not divisions. Not that the narrow limitations do not creep into the manifoldness of Indian spiritual culture! But still, even the Asuras did not succeed to split and squeeze into a dogma the grand religious spirit of India. There, perhaps, are more distortions and superstitions amongst the populace than in any other race, but distortions are temporal, obvious and ridiculous, whereas an intellectual wellorganized split is a deep wound.

Again third student: It seems the "popular religion" is on such a gross level, especially when one comes to see the higher meaning of religion.

Valentina: I just told you that tolerance is a virtue! Take it easy! Don't become "too holy"! The man who understands is tested not to become proud, spiritually proud, not to assert his wisdom, but humbly and gracefully and gratefully prostrate to the Divine grace. It is only by the divine Grace that we understand differences and understand the possibility to overcome the dif ferences. Otherwise, what you term as seeing "the higher meaning of religion" could be very surplus and presumptuous.

So that is about it. Happy Rosh Hashanah to you! And glorious advent of Sri Ganesha for those of you who care to know who He is. [7] In reference to the latter, here is another very dangerous point of misunderstanding the Cosmic Forces which I feel and love so intensely. For instance, an average lew would and say, "We believe only in one God!" Do you really?! Well, one God has many say it is idolatry; so would the average Christian.

They will proudly turn away forces. Do not make a lewish God of Him and do not make a Christian God out of Him. Do not make anything out of Him, but realize Him! Om Sakti... (With a tender musing smile] Sri Ganesha...He is the presiding deity of this month...

7

**Sri Ganesha Chaturthi fell on the 9th of September*

Gurudev's Birthday

(September 8, 1975)

[On the Birthday of Gurudev Sivananda, Valentina read passages from His books]

"A disciple is he who follows the instructions of the Guru to the letter and spirit and who propagates the Teachings of the Guru to less evolved souls in the Path till the end of his life."

Student: I have been faced very much with the Sivananda "propaganda" and a little shocked even. Will You kindly explain to me what this means to "propagate?"

Valentina: [Ironically] You choose a rather daring method of the keen inves. tigation of the Dhamma, don't you?!

Student: I'd love to! But what is Dhamma? [Laughter]

Valentina: Well, it is the thorough analysis of things the way they are. Propagating to the "less evolved souls" should be wise. Instead of disseminating the Knowledge, the zealous but not wise propagandist simply stifles the Teachings. Alas, there is too much ambition and too little discrimination. Instead of ardour usually there is sentimentality and cant. Thus, I agree with youYou must understand things in their right perspective! So often, even the great pundits and the great philosophers and the great whatevers, the great as far as their erudition and even onceuponatime devotion is concerned, are failing when they want to "protect" the idea; they want to carry on the Teachings of the Guru or the

Master, and what they are doing actually is retiring into the corner of quotations and sentimentality. Alas, it is inevitable in all movements which become widely spread. The spirit leaves and only the form remains. What is then to be shocked about?! Mind your own business and let the noisemakers mind theirs!

Student: But Guru, under the disguise of the Scriptures there are many of those who seem to me to be obvious fakers and are asserting only themselves. I sure can't learn any thing from them.

Valentina: Then don't learn. Who asked you to? Or learn how not to learn. If you learn that, mind your own business and let them mind theirs. [Laughter) Don't you notice how we have the examples of the church, for instance?! Some churches fossilize Christ inside their walls. Goes out Christ; comes in priest. For centuries and generations we do not have Christ. The same thing exactly happens with Yoga. We have great Masters but we do not have Yoga.

Student: Guru, why has this developed?

Valentina: Because very few practice. Most only quote. Grave fact, is it not? The pious Sannyasins are quoting and the fools are listening. Nobody is practicing. Result? Mediocrity, my Children.

Student: Specifically, where is the falsehood?

Valentina: The falsehood is in the nonperception of the "Thusness." You can't practice mechanically; there should be no pretense. One starts practicing when one neither talks nor exposes his inner work nor debates about it, above all when one knows all his hindrances.

Student: What You have said now just refers to people like Yourself. How can anybody else fit in? Don't You speak for Yourself, Valentina, subjectively?

Valentina: What seems to you as subjectivity and withdrawal from the ordinary mentality simply is the Truth undiscovered by you. In proportion that it becomes discovered, it loses the aloofness, it becomes yours too. But in the initial states, very few can grasp the higher and newer nuance of the Truth.

Student: Well, if I may, what did not degenerate into mediocrity?

Valentina: That which is eternally right! Ram Ram Ram Ram... Krishna...Most sacred Heart of Jesus! These Names never degenerate! [Pause]

Student: The Name doesn't degenerate, but how about the songsters of the Name?

Valentina: Don't rub it in! /Laughter] Rather think about the true cultivation of the Name. Where the Name is always revered is India. Since times immemorial they simply adore! They do not limit, do not compel one faith for all. Result?! Rama and Krishna reach the hearts even abroad. Truth lives in freedom.

Student: How can a man with the stubborn clinging to the old mentality be reached?

Valentina: Definitely someone has to tell him, and the learned priest and the learned rabbi and the learned pundit are the people who can tell something. Sure. And some of them tell you beautiful things, beautifully too. But the point is that it is up to you to make the truth Truth; nobody else will make it for you. You can hear about it and you can read about it and you can think about it, but this will not make you the follower of Truth. You have to experience it. You have to have at least some glimpses into something in order to practice it. So all the "propagation of the Teachings of the Guru" is a grotesque unless one really experiences them. To establish the following and to kill the spirit?! Well...

Valentina continues the reading]

"A true disciple is concerned only with the Divine nature of the Guru. The Guru's action as man is not disciple's concern at all. He is totally oblivious of it. To him the Guru is God. He looks at Guru as at the Divine. Criticize not your Guru's action which is done on

universal vision. Judge him not. Measure not his Divine Nature with the inadequate yardstick of your ignorance. True discipleship opens the vision. It kindles the spiritual fire; it awakens the dor. mant faculties; it is most necessary in one's journey along the spiritual Path. Guru and disciple become one. Guru blesses, guides and inspires disciple. He transmits his spiritual power to him. He transforms, he spiritualizes him.

"...Who is qualified to approach the Guru? To approach a Guru, you must be a proper disciple. Correct understanding, nonattachment to worldly objects, serenity of mind, restraint of senses, absence of base passions, absolute faith in the Guru and devotion to God are the necessary equipments with which the aspirant has to approach the Guru."

Student: Guru, it seems that very few could meet these qualifications. I wonder now many are here in the same room with You, but how many of us are "approaching You?"

Valentina: The main problem is that you forget the inspiration! Prolong your bright moments...and love more!

[Valentina continues the reading]

The Guru will impart spiritual instructions only to that aspirant who thirsts for Knowledge and Liberation, who duly obeys the injunctions of the Shastras or Scriptures, who has subdued his passions and senses, who has a calm mind and who possesses virtuous qualities like mercy, Cosmic Love, patience, humility, endurance, forbearance. Aspirants should direct their whole attention in the beginning towards removal of selfishness by protracted service to the Guru. Serve your Guru with Divine Bhava; the cancer of selfishness will be dissolved. The captain of a ship is ever alert, a fisherman is ever alert. Even so a thirsting, hungry disciple should be alert in the service of his Guru. Live to serve the Guru! You must watch for opportunities; do not wait for invitations. Volunteer your service to the Guru! Serve your Guru humbly, willingly, unquestioningly, unassumingly, ungrudgingly, untiringly, lovingly. The more of your energy you spend in serving Guru, the more the Divine Energy will flow into you. He who serves the Guru serves the whole world."

Student: Could Guru please explain what Gurudev means by "to serve Guru is to serve the whole world?"

Valentina: This is meant figuratively. Surely if you abnegate your ego and without any vanity and bargaining wholeheartedly give your time and abilities, your work and your help to your spiritual authority, surely you heighten your vibrations and are contributing to the welfare of "the whole world." That does not mean that you are literally in contact with the whole world! But it means that if you are dedicated to the mission of your Guru you are bettering yourself first and, thus, helping the whole world. If every single person would "serve" wholeheartedly his spiritual ideal the world would instantaneously become beautiful!

[Valentina continues the reading]

"Serve the Guru. Serve without selfish end. Scrutinize your inner motives while doing service to the Guru. Service must be done to the Guru without expectation of anything, no fame, name, power, wealth, etc. Obedience is a precious virtue, because if you try to develop the virtue of obedience, then the egothe arch enemy on the Path of SelfRealizationslowly gets rooted out." Student: Guru, certainly we are extremely blessed, for we have this contact with You, Your projection of Truth, the Satsangs with You.

Valentina: [Smiles] Probably you are rightthe sages sang that Satsang is even as a good boat which takes you safely across this horrible ocean of Samsara. "...Resort to Satsanga; then gradually you will realize the incalculable benefits of Satsanga. Life is short. Time is fleeting. Death is waiting. It is very difficult to get again the human birth." says Gurudev.

Student: Guru, I'm a little puzzled. I always thought that once one had obtained human birth that it was certainly guaranteed that if one returned to the earth, it would be again in a human form. In this quote of Gurudev, He emphasizes that it may be very difficult to get again the human birth. Could Guru please explain?

Valentina: The important thing to understand is that in human form one loses his opportunities if one is not vigilant and one can be thrown either out of the human into the subhuman form or into the disembodied unconsciousness. And then one might be in between, going through various vague halfexistences, and that is what is horrible...groping...that complete severance from consciousness...wandering and groping, veiled, halfnightmare, halfsleep, struggle and oblivion. And one is not sure how

many aeons it will take him to obtain a privileged state and form of a human being with ability to think, with ability to strive and perform Sadhana! And nobody can but the human and the human does not do it, you see? It is difficult to get again the life in the human body, for that in itself presupposes a certain readiness to start thinking consciously, striving consciously, feeling consciously, evolving consciously...consciously, you see? One has to deserve it.

Says Gurudev: "...Utilize human birth profitably in the realization of your Self through Satsanga. Realize the SatChitAnanda Atman through Satsanga.

Then alone you can be free."

Gurudeva! Blessed Birthday. Om Sakti.

Sri Ganesha

September 9, 1975

Sri Ganesha, a most powerful Divine Force that literally removes the obstacles from the Path of the true man who worships that Force. Indeed I speak about this endearing Force reluctantly. Too much curiosity in the West on one side, humbug on the other side and cynical disbelief which goes together with it! Hencejust a few words!

Student: How does one worship the Force of Sri Ganesha?

Valentina: By cultivating Wisdom, for He stands for Supreme Intelligence! He can remove your obstacles only if you remove your stupidity and cupidity! He cannot deal with stupid people. Now, it does not mean that you have to become the professor of all the occult sciences and all Yogasnot at all. There can be much stupidity in book lore too. Smart aleckness, which argues and which does not humble itself that is stupidity. What is wanted is a pure heart which also is a wise heart. It is not the erudite mind Sri Ganesha deals with, but a pure heart which is ready to accept wisdom, to develop wisdom, to develop higher intelligence. It all culminates in one pointhow pure is your heart?!

Student: That is as far as the replacement of stupiditymay God help me! But You said also "cupidity."

Valentina: [Laughs) I sure did! And not just for a nursery rhyme! But cupidity or inordinately avaricious, greedy mind can never invoke the Grace of Ganesha, for He is Generosity personified. So have you to be if you want to invoke Him.

Student: Your worship of Sri Ganesha is electrifying. Guru, how does one come to know a Divinity like Sri Ganesha?

Valentina: [Smiling) It is an intellectual question. It shows you were not electrified so much after all!... These are "Cosmic hues." Unless you develop an insight into Cosmology, into Eternal Values, into the...ah, really hues and rays of the One God, you cannot and should not even think about it. In India where the Cosmic secrets were Vedically and Puranically revealed under different mythological guises, it took two forms: the elite knows and the populace makes it a picturesque but rather superstitious celebration and ritual. Well, here is precisely where men are sincere, whether they are learned or superstitious. Whereas the in betweener is simply curious and could not care less. There is no sincerity and no deep interest in him; there is only curiosity and dry jargon, and with such I do not deal.

The in between is the scheming, analyzing, trying to adjust the Unutterable to the utterable. "That" can be perceived only in deep silence, in the revelation, by the Grace of these very Cosmic Forces whom we worship. When we are discussing and adjustable to our rational mentality. In other words, the poetry will go and intellectually, we are in great danger of making the Unutterable very discussable together with the poetry also will go the wisdom and the great secret. Turning to the student Not that I did not want to "appease your hunger" [Smiling/, but I am careful not to make a "hoolahoola," the humbug, out of the verily Unutterable. We are to sacredly approach the Secret till it reveals itself...and then it...well, yes, it becomes our secret!

...If it becomes our secret, then we do not ask questions about the secret.

We know it already and then we are very careful not to abuse it and not to irreverently expose it for the curious. That is how esoteric schools came into existence, and then there sprang up the opposition to esotericism because esotericism can also become a nonsense. In the hands of the priest, it becomes not "sacred secret" but the secret which is not willed to be exposed for the benefit of others! And then come men like Vivekananda and say, "Knowledge for all!" Then come men like Sivananda and twice shout, "Knowledge for all, all!" You see why this reaction? Because of the abuse of the secret.

...You see, I can be accused by some illwishers of precisely the unavailability and another extreme of "hiding." You have to make a very subtle discernment between hiding and revering.

Student: I appreciate that so much because it is what You just said, a subtle discernment, because for those of us, including myself, who do not have that welldeveloped, subtle discernment, it is often painful to have to use one's logic or thinking to evaluate if what we are saying is a little bit too much, or perhaps we are sentimentalizing it, exaggerating it. I sure am guilty of lacking in discrimination and measure.

Valentina: So long as you feel that you are not too successful psychologically, you are okay. When you are dealing with the other people, trying to "give to them," imagining that you are "elevating them," etc.oh, that is very dangerous! It is important to know how to conceal for preservation of the values and how not to hide the values out of selfishness...

It is absolutely impossible to disgrace that which you yourself love or get pleasure out of or cultivate on whatever level. How can you give it to the enemy, let's say, or the fool who will tramp upon it? You see? So that is why the concealing comes into existence, not because you want to deprive another man of knowledge but because the careless exposure is disgraceful. It disgraces the one who talks about it, the one who listens about it as well as that which is displayed. Your heart should prompt the generosity of giving, sharing, clarifying, etc. But your head should control the cheap emotionalism as well as the unmeasured words. The good judgement is to say only when necessary, only what is beneficial, only...to the right man!

Yom Kippur

September 15, 1975

[An evening outdoor class of Nada Yoga Asana, Pranayama)

Om Shanti. God bless everybody in the name of Yom Kippur!

Before we will start the evening I have to say a word in honour of this great night of the Yom Kippur. It would be wrong not to say it. Thousands and mil. lions of pious Jews tonight are united in the name of atonement and we have to join them, for I believe in joining the righteous in whatever form, in what. ever way, and wherever I find myself! This is forcefully reminded to me through mysterious signs which I do follow. It is a great night when it is taken greatly! not traditionally and not habitually and not mechanically, but deeply, faithfully and inwardly... Renew us, oh the Great Sakti, for life without impurities and shame! [Silence...Asanas follow]

Whenever you will do the Asanas you will give your body and your mind to the Supreme, to that Eternal, who is forever, within and without. There has to be feeling of profoundest repentance; there has to be an intelligent selfexamination. Not that we are doing it only on the days of atonement, but the vibration is so very strongly projected now, as I say, by crowds as well as by the more conscious minds of people who truly repent, fast and adore.

Student: Guru, how can we avoid the despondency and breast beating which creeps into atonement?

Valentina: You see, in this day of atonement one is prompted and requested to consider himself a sinner, for he is a sinner, every man is, the outer man. On the other hand, it is unhealthy to consider yourself a sinner chronically, perpetually. It seems to me that, spiritually speaking, it is a parallel practice. You definitely are rejecting your lower nature which is of no use to you if you are starting the Path. This rejecting is manifesting itself in deep repentance, sorrow, at times even disgust. These attitudes are somewhat similar to the Vedantic Vairagya or dispassion towards your worldly life, towards yourself as a lower

entity. You are, after deep, sorrowful selfexamination, turning away from it. On the other hand, it goes parallely, mind you, for the one who is on the Path, with the personal realization of the Divine Being within and eventually wins over the sorrows and the pessimism of the initial stages of the life of the neophyte. Blessed is he who is realized in that inner realm. Man has to earn realization of the Light above and within.

So again I repeat, it is a parallel process; on one side you really repent for the transgressions committed by your lower nature! On the other side, you are meditating and recognizing within yourself the sinless, the beautiful, the Forever. So that Forever is offended by the temporal and hence comes acknowledgment, selfexamination, repentance and surrender to that greatness which is also present within every human being as his soul. This is what I see as the parallel process.

Student: Sometimes I am depressed during the Yom Kippur.

Valentina: Perhaps you misunderstand its great purifying impact? Student: I guess it's the recollections of the traditions during my childhood. I was brought up in an orthodox Jewish family and everyone looked upon Yom Kippur as the day of great sorrow.

Valentina: But now you are a grownup, big man with a big beard! [All laugh] So ask your self: is it for this purpose? Or is it for the purpose of cleansing the dross, cleansing all the falsehood in order that we might get a glimpse into the Higher within ourselves!?

First student: I begin to realize that what You are teaching is neither for Jewish, nor for Christian, nor for Vedantin.

Valentina: Congratulations!

Third student: It's just great to know that in Jewish religion forgiveness is assured!

Valentina: [Smiling] Well, we decided not to specify the origins, and it seems to me that in all religions, not only in Jewish, you are "forgiven"...but the forgiveness is received through all your tears. Without it how can you be? It has to be the very core of your heart!

Then you are forgiven. But in what sense? In the sense that you are burning your Karmas. You see, when you are uplifting your consciousness through great humility (for that is what Yom Kippur requires), what happens? You simultaneously are attracting the Grace of God, and the Grace of God knows not the Law of Karmait is above even the Law! So even the bad Karma can be removed from you through much repentance, humility and surrender. Imagine the greatness of it! God is above everythingabove good and evil, above even the Law of Retribution. He says, "Here is your chance once a year, stand up, wash your self, confess, admit! You'll be purified." But, my Child, it requires a lot of selfgiving; it is a heroic effort. If you do not mean it and if you do not do it, you cannot be forgiven. Why? Because you do not want it. Because you do not have enough strength to give of yourself. It requires two, God and a sinner. One without another cannot do it. [Silence]

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(Later in the Garden]

...Now we shall contemplate parallely the concept of rejection of sin and the concept of rejoicing at, not even virtue, but Spirit which is above virtue. It is a fascinating meditation if you understand it, first intellectually and then realize intuitively.

Watching your breath, please literally repeat the prayer of the "classic sin. ner," the publican; [Powerfully] "Lord be merciful to me the sinner!" And then...throw the sinner overboard! And concentrate upon your freedom from sin, your immortal beauty! (Silence. Deep concentration follows]

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Student: Guru, You often mention the words, Divine Grace, and I confess, I'm not aware of its real meaning.

Valentina: Would you understand it better if I would say Divine Benevolence, Divine Giving, Divine Care, Divine Perfection ever ready to give Itself freely? There is such thing as the Divine Benevolence which meets your needs if you open yourself to it, which protects you and guides you. The fact, for instance, that you are here is the Grace. Realize

it; accept it as such. Then you will understand more what I am talking about. Whenever you are able to perform something beautiful, it is by the Grace, because human will is frail. So when you know that there is such thing as the Divine Benevolence to the sinner and to the saint, you will experience the Grace! It is everywhere; it is the Divine Sakti. You cannot demand it and you cannot go and get it, but you can realize it and receive it.

Student: How to realize?

Valentina: If you give your faith and your love and your readiness to accept, you will realize. It means to be absolutely still, not to demand, not to argue, but to give the one thing which the Divine Grace is "expecting" (that is not quite the right word, but for want of the better one) and that is your heart. That is the one thing you have to give yourself. If you do not open yourself, you cannot receive it. It is here, but in order to realize it you have to give your whole being.

And by the way, if you do give yourself not a little bit, not just five percent, but totally, that is the only guarantee that you will not drop out and that you will not become a waste in the Cosmos. You give yourself and the Divine Grace is realized by younot that it bargains with you, "Give me yourself, I'll give you Myself." No, that is human "love". The Divine does not bargain; yet there is the law of giving and receiving. What is necessary is to open yourself to it, just like this moment was the breezenow it is no more! But when it is, you have to notice that it is!

In that connection it occurred to me now that every religion has in itself the Divine element, or the Grace, which is hidden and has to be realized. It also has the human element which does not have to be realized, which is absolutely evident.

Ordinary man deals with the absolutely evident, whereas the spiritual man is dealing with the inner significance of the religion, not with its dead letter. Hence, the Grace can be realized only by the spiritual man.

Student: Could I have a concrete example?

Valentina: Okay, here is your concrete example. You are a savage and as a savage you see only the sparkling glass in a diamond. Even so you approach the religionsavagely. You hear about the goodness, but you haven't got the goodness. You do not know the diamond of your religion. It requires a true spiritual culture to tell the great movement or the great revelation, doctrine, philosophy, religion, mysticism, etc. in its pristine glory... And that is only by the Grace. Student: I admit I am a savage! You correctly defined me, Ma'am. Is there any hope for me to tell the diamond?

Valentina: Yes, there is. By becoming first a little less savage! [All laugh] By becoming a little bit more educated, cultivated. And when you are sufficiently cultured, you stand in awe and say, "Gee, I passed by it thousand times and I didn't know that it's a diamond." The same thing is the Grace. It is here all the time, every moment; in every breath of yours, there is the Grace of God which sustains this breath of yours. But you, if you are a savage, cannot understand it and, of course, cannot realize it. Therefore, the spiritual life is the way and the means of understanding, accepting and realizing the Divine Grace...

...So that is what I wanted to tell you in this month of September: that unless you expand your consciousness through love of that One who is within you and "does" your life, you cannot attract the Grace of this One, the Grace or the benevolence or the help. You please translate it the way it is easier for you to understand. It is only by the Grace that you become a deeper thinker, a greater man, a truer devotee. And in order to accept and to realize this Grace, we have not to miss a single opportunity to think about it, to love it, to meditate upon it. That is how we allow it to descend into our consciousness.

It is a very beautiful contemplationthe Divine Grace or the Divine Generosity or the Divine Care. The Bible told you that no one cares for you except God. Well, that "caring for you" is the Divine Grace. He supplies everything. A baby, when he is still in the womb, is taken care of, not by the mother, but by that Divine Saktithe Grace.

So let us now submit ourselves to that Divine Grace. That is the only thing you can do, by the way, because you cannot do much more. The only thing you can do is to love that which is responsible for every breath...(Silence]

OCTOBER

On The Verge of Navaratri

We are coming to the month of Navaratri and I will call this month (probably everybody will guess) [Valentina gives an enchantingly childlike and playful smile]guess! [Laughter] Yes, of course it is called "Devi." If you want to translate it into English, call it the Divine Energy. Submit yourself to it, have faith in It, pray for Ityou will get It. Om Devi...

...Now in this very great...very great Observance, the Navaratri, which means the nine days of intensest devotion to the Mother, we have a chance to increase our discrimination, to burn our sins, to repent for our misdeeds, to open up to the Divine Mother in any of Her manifestations. There are innumerable manifestations of the Maha Sakti. The Divine Mother is God in action. To define Her is to deny Her. It is too immense for definition...

Special astrological constellations, it is said, intensify the flow of the Sakti! Concentrating upon these various aspects of God as we practice here, you can really and truly accelerate your growth in that you are dealing consciously with a tiny wee bit of a cosmos within yourself visàvis the tremendous Cosmos outside you...Oh! the unrepeatableness of these nights! Every night intense, unusual, unpredictable, all by the grace of the Divine. Blessed are those who receive, and I am praying for those who refuse to receive. Student: Guru, why is it so difficult for us to receive?

Valentina: It is very difficult because usually you close the gates with your own emotions, with your own thoughts which are not acceptable to that vibration of the Highest, The Highest has different vibration. It is so full of Light and it is so full of velocity. It is different vibration altogether! It is not that the Highest does not Love you and does not want to help you, but there is certain Law in the Universe, in the Cosmos. It is only like that attracts like...

...There is a struggle of influences in the world, or perhaps in the worlds, for there are many domains and there are many influences and vibrations which struggle. The opposing force does not sleep and struggles with the god force. Few people are aspiring ardently enough to attract the Divine Force. There is definitely the descent of that specific

Divine Force and this is a tremendous influence. The influence is Divine. The influence is scorching the sins, destroying the facades of human soul. Man who is endowed with the right sensitivity is opening himself to this Divine Force. And it need not be necessarily man who knows the specific folklore of Hinduism, or let's measure it higherwho knows the philosophy of the Upanishads, who knows the Devi Mahatmayam, who is the worshipper of the Divine Mother. No! It would be very, very limited influence, would it not, if it would be only for those who read, heard, studied or dedicated themselves to special philosophical, religious, or mystical idea. The point is that the influence is there and sensitive people who are endowed with affinity to that Force are feeling it very much during these particular days. Let it be a peasant or let it be a savant, anyone can feel the Force... Student: Can I invoke it and feel it more?

Valentina: [Annoyed] I don't think you feel it at all, so why should you bother about feeling it more?! Although I did mention that "anyone" can feel it, but it presupposes at least the minimal inwardness as well as openness to inspiration. I must warn that there are too many pseudooccult curiosities and superstitions which indeed are neither intelligent nor pure. That is why it is much better for a man who is not purified to stick to his orthodox religion and forget about everything which is beyond his scope. You have to have certain qualifications in order to touch the hem of the Divine Mother. These qualifications are not based on erudition and big scholarship but on purity of heart, sensitivity of heart, dedication to the Supreme. And the purified heart, I tell you, does feel the Cosmic influences.

...The best way to open to the most potent influence of the Divine Mother in Her various aspects is to be, during these auspicious days, very concentrated upon the Divine and also very careful, for the influences are so many...so many. And the man whose heart is heavy, whose mind is unclear, whose nervous system is weak, is definitely opening himself not to the Divine influence but to the asuric influence which manifests itself in every possible field, corner and environment.

Second student: Does it mean that the forces of darkness are also stronger during this timedespite the descent of the Divine Mother? Is that why we should be

so careful during the Navaratri?

Valentina: My Child, first of all, let us be careful this moment, now, if I may! Let's not use so casually such expressions as the "descent of the Divine Mother." That precisely leads us into casual interpretations. Each one displays his/her weak spots precisely when carried away by something above the everydayness. Then, indeed, you attract mathematically the very thing you are. You cannot say, "descent of the Divine Mother" as if you are entitled to it, as if it is a factual thing for you. It is extremely difficult to invoke the descent of the Divine Mother; it is extremely difficult! But indeed, it is very easy to "let us play the occult." There is so much "hoolahoola" all overall those "Hare Krishna" shouting cults, all those exotic degenerations in every corner of India as well as New York and California! They hear and believe there is something, yet they do not have sufficient discrimination, sufficient reverence, sufficient fear even, ordinary fear (well, I call it caution) to not commit a faux pas. You see, my Child, there are certain things which we have to digest within ourselves very quietly.

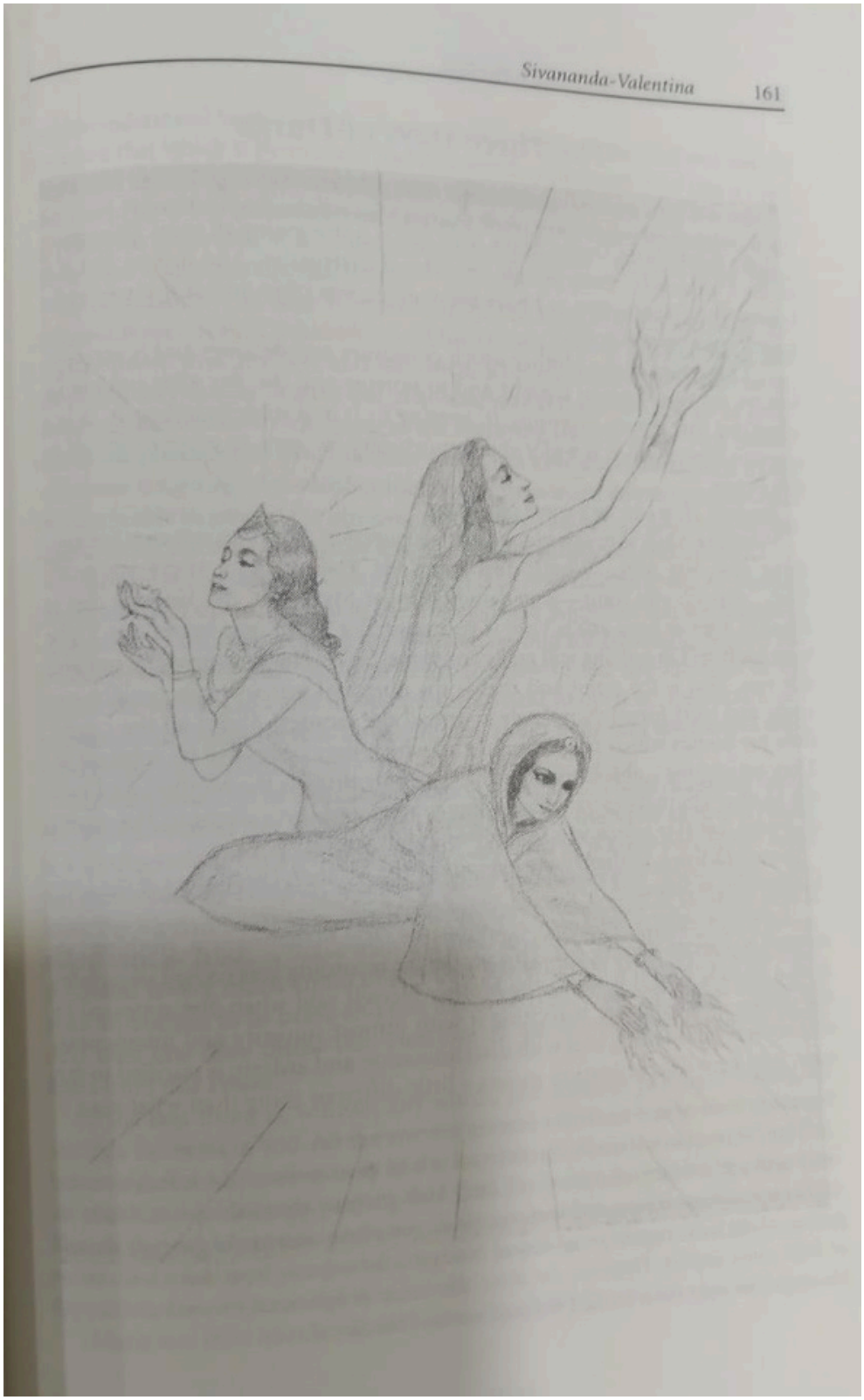
Student: Thank you for saving me from "hoolahoola!" glib attitude and tall talks. I will try to be very cautious.

Valentina: Extremely cautious! Extremely cautious starts now. Extremely careful does not mean egoconscious, does not mean fearful, but means rever. ent, but means wise, but means spiritual. It is to carefully, cautiously avoid the "let's pretend, let's play Navaratri now!" Every observance requires caution for the person who does not want simply elaborations and traditions or plain hypocrisy, or humbug. It is to cautiously go within yourself and to see how acceptable you are to God.

It is an opportunity to uplift your levels. It means very great humility, purity, gratitude. All the good human feelings which you can dig out of yourself have to be now used. And when you use them, you build the panacea against the forces of ignorance, the Dark Forces. Then only you can, a little bit, hope to invoke that Divine Mercy, that Divine Presence, that Divine grace, that descent of the Divine Mother! It is not easy to invoke it. It is absolutely difficult. Man is using the weapons which are contrary to the Perfection of God. It is not that the Perfection of God is so stiff that it would not want to say "Hi" to you. But you have to use the same coinno clashes. So that is what it is all about. You have to be very, very humbleI won't say evolved, great or high! Humble!

Third Student: [Quite casually] I see what you mean. It's so simple like it's just to have purity of heart, not to be erudite, really I got it. It is simple!

Valentina: Oh so simple? Just [Ironically] a pure heart, ah? But that is not "just to have". That is precisely what I am trying to warn you against, because the "just to have" implies that it is simpler than to be erudite. "Just to have" is far more difficult than to be erudite. To be erudite is very difficult also. Tell me how many people are really scholarly, erudite, intelligent and intellectual, really serious, learned? This is the heights of our humanity and civilization, so we cannot casually dismiss it. Yet to be pure in heart is far more. It surpasses even the scholarly and the most learned and erudite of this world. So it is not "just to be pure in heart." Very often people of incapacity say that they are "pure in heart." Or people who are simpleminded think that they are pure in heart. Because they do not have the range and brilliance of the intellectual, they say, [Miming a naive tone) "Well, we are 'just'...we are just pure in heart." No. The "just pure in heart" does not exist. It is an enormous achievement through enormous selfeffacement. So it is very difficult. And for that we shall pray for that purity of heart. Vivekananda, when people were introduced to him as worthy of his attention, would, in a childlike manner say, "Please tell me, is he pure...in heart?" [Silence] Well...



The Three Days of Durga

October 68, 1975

Let's think about Durga. Maha Kalil She is tippytoeing all over! This aspect of the Divine is by many people considered destructive. And it is so, but it is benevolently destructive, as Ihave been telling you often and at this particular season most emphatically.

...This aspect of the Mother which consumes and destroys and is very violent we are worshipping tonight and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, admitting this Power, accepting It, praying to It and understanding It. It is a glorious Power and it is a glorious opportunity for man to expose himself to this Power.

Student: How can we expose ourselves?

Valentina: Only through absolute selfabnegation. She does not care for any. thing else! She says, "What?! You want Me and yet you assert yourself?! Well...who do you want your falsehoodor My Truth, the Veracity that is Myself?! Rien de beau que le Vrai! If you want Her Truth, you better don't joke with Mother! Oh no! She will really consume! So let Her consume the sins and not you. That is the point and that is the object of our worship tonightto really and truly forget completely about all the facades! About all the stupid, little toy houses which people build and which they believe to be substantial. They are nothing...absolutely nothing. The only thing is the Mother! And now the Mother approaches us through our prayers and invocations in Her aspect of Durga. Let Her scorch you search you, uplift you!...

Now let's listen to the Divine exploits of the Mother. [Recitation of the Devi Mahatmayam follows][8]

[8] *It is impossible to describe the intenseness and spontaneity of Valentina's remarks, interrupting Her own recitation of the Devi Mahatmayam. In transcription it loses its intenseness, convincingness and realness. Hence, we allow ourselves to give just a small portion of the transcription pertaining to Navaratri Satsangs, in hope that it will convey at least some impact. However, for those who want a more comprehensive review of Navaratri, we refer them to the 1974 publication, "On Sakti."*

[Valentina, after a short silence] I adore the Devi Mahatmayam. Nothing can surpass it. I recite it every day. This particular recording was recited completely at a stretch. And it is said the Mother Herself said when She appeared to the devas that whoever is reciting it with utmost sincerity and intenseness, and whoever is listening to it with discrimination and ardour, is purified to the core. And here discrimination means a little different thing than what man is use to understand by this word discrimination between the Real and unreal, between that which is permanent and that which is temporal. So if one is concentrated upon Devi Mahatmayam with such discrimination, one, it is said by the Devi Herself, is instantaneously purged from may, many impurities. It all depends on the degree of faith, concentration, devotion...we shall listen again from Devi Mahatmayam. [Recitation]

In this chapter the Sage is explaining to the king and the merchant the Delusive Power of the Divine Mother. That Delusive Power is called Maya, and it plays havoc with the best and the worst, with everybody. "Although we do know that they do not deserve our affection, why is it that we still are so affectionate to the unworthy kinsmen, to the betraying friends, to the very unsuitabletous profession?!" Why? Because we do not have discrimination. It is only when one is turning to the higher life the discrimination dawns upon him and he then is able to give up the obvious absurdities of his life, do give them up, not theoretically, but really, but truly laugh at certain situations! [Recitation]

So you see what is the Cosmic Play. It is beyond human grasp. All you can do is just open upopen up to the Mercy of the Supreme. You are partaking of something which is beyond the intellect, beyond the reasoning, beyond the thinking, but just...just for your heart to feel to feel the Presence of the Infinite Power of God and to open up to It. And to open up specifically, as I stressed. with Durga there is no joking. You've got to be very sincere and most selfabnegating... [Silence]

We shall now join in a silent meditation. Imagine...a huge, huge fire which She produces from Her fingers, from Her shoulders, from Her eyes; everything is a conflagration. [As Valentina spoke, it appeared as if every part of Her body, but most especially Her face, was transfigured into flames and blazes] Well...She loves the human heart very much. When She scorches it, it is in order that it might turn to Truth. A brave man is a great lover of that aspect of the Divine. A coward is very much afraid of Her and She is not on good terms with cowards. So one has to be brave and one has to be true, then one is also beautiful!

And then one does throw into Her Fire all the things which separate one's heart from this Power.

So the best thing is, without any words, just through profound feeling, to sacrifice the beast in you. All the ancient animal sacrifices had in view the symbolization of the throwing away of the impurities of human nature. When you are with utmost sincerity praying that that Divine Power may accept into Her Fire all that which is not necessary for your evolution, you understood correctly. And after that, you become lighter, healthier, stronger. You feel you are supported, for you have rightly resolved. [Music and then intense silence and meditation follow]

Devi Mahatmayam is the most exotic Scripture for most people who are not studying it. Last night I told you about the very mystical influence which this recitation produces when one attunes himself to it. And I suggest that you concentrate upon the very rhythm of this recitation; you will benefit even if you don't understand it. The meaning of it is esoteric; it is hidden, it is mysti cal... [Recitation]

Now isn't it interesting that the Devas were replaced by the Asuras! The Asuras, or the diabolical forces, the dark forces of the Cosmos, here are all the time described not like the ugly and the miserable lot whom it is very easy to destroy. No! They were even equipped with the ability to rule in Devaloka! The difference is that they are dirty and the Devas are pure. There are various calibres of diabolical forces, from the bright and talented down to the most obvi ously dull, vicious, ugly and entirely disgustinglike either small cockroaches or the huge crocodile, only much more harmful...And the ones who dared to go against God Himself in the form of the Divine Mother were certainly very powerful beings but extremely indecent, monstrously corrupt. And you can well notice here how these beingsthe dark beings were conquering the beings of Light and that these beings of Light were compelled "to walk as mortals." That is the most significant and interesting part, the darkness invaded the region of Light. Don't we have the very similar occurrence here on earth! As a matter of fact, this little earth reflects the regions above. As above so below. And so we see here that sometimes people who are pious and virtuous are completely swept by the powerful lords of this worldthe wealthy, the strong, the handsome, but the corrupt. And the Devas were conquered by these demons... [Recitation]

The Devas gave their light to form up the body of the Divine Mother; She is always there, but She has to be embodied. If you remember the first chapter which I recited yesterday,

She is Eternal, but when She is to fulfill the right exploit She takes form. And She does not have to be born in the womb, from the womb of the mortal being. But Her body was created by the combined energies of various Divine Beings. Please we shall continue... [Recitation]

It sounds like a magic story, like unimaginable fantasy, difficult to fathom; but really and truly, the one who thinks, feels and realizes in Cosmic scope is not surprised. Here She gives heaves and through thatthrough Her sighsare created armies of the Devas who are fighting. Everything in the Invisible Realm (invisible for the thick earthly sight) is very visible for the spiritual eye. Everything there is created by thought, not by matter. So She thinks, She Gives energy. and She creates battalions of the fighting forces of Light.

This powerful, fierce battle, the merciless killing, that gruesome and gross description of the bloodshed, only illustrates in very, very condensed colours that there is no life for evil. The darkness has no right to live. Some ignorant people say, "How terrible, how horrible." Oh really?! Poor darling Asuras, then?! What's horrible?! That which should live is only Light. The darkness has no right to continue. I cannot call it "to evolve" because there is no evolution for it, but let us say, has no right to continue its life of vicious, deliberate sin. It is a disturbing element, the element which has to be removed. Can the dark forces accept evolution and agree to transform themselves? No. That is just the point. protest against God. They may have the riches of all the three worlds and they might develop their intellect, and some of them, as I explained, do! But they are turning their face away from the Supreme Power; therefore they have no right to live...they have no right.

That also, of course, is a grave warning to every human being. If one is turning his face away from Light and if one dares to raise his hand, or his thought, [Intensely] or his tongue against the Light, he will perish. You may ask, "But everybody is daring to be blasphemous; everybody in today's modern life is fighting the Light." Well, I shall console you. Everybody will perish (Pause)the everybody who dares to oppose the Light under the disguise sometimes of the working with the Light! That won't do!because the Light is the Light, and the lack of Light is darkness.

[Musingly and quietly) Emerson once was opposing some philosopher who said something to that effect: "My way is to make the small big and the big small." Emerson exclaimed: "In no way! The real justice is to be able to strongly show that the small (or the dark, etc.) are small and the great are great!" Student: Guru, thank You for Your words on

those who turn away from Truth their lamentable Karma. Yet knowing this, it is absurd that those who turn to Truth cannot hold. Why is this?

Valentina: To turn to Truth is not necessarily to stay with Truth. You see yourselves how difficult it is to prolong the high note. So when people do turn to the Higher Goal, and even sincerely so, they get pooped; they get tired; comes a reaction and comes an urge to go back to dense existence. Not even formulated in words, but it is simply a comfortable feeling to be...to (Laughing) be comfortable!not to have any intenseness, not to have the perpetual watching and praying. It is difficult for a human being to remember the higher Reality. It becomes easy and delightful when one is thoroughly established in Truth. But when one is just, as you said, turning towards it, it is very difficult, for one can just as easily turn away from it.

And here, I repeat, is where the opposition should be watchednot superstitiously, but scientifically. How long can you delight in inner investigation? How long can you delight in watching and praying? How long are you noticing and remembering your Self, your higher Self? How long? Really. If there is at all integrity, you will say, "For almost no time" so difficult it is. You are established in Truth not though the brain, but through the heart. And by the heart is meant not emotional human heart, but the spiritual exaltation of that part of the heart, that spiritual center, where God dwells. He dwells, it is said, in the heart. So that is what it is.

Yeess... People are not able to sing the high note, and I tell you, the whole humanitysearch and lookwill reveal to you only microscopical amount of those who can, because most are on the certain rung which they cannot overcome. It is to transcend that outer personality and then you are able to sing. So even those (and those are everybody [Smiling] who cannot sing, they still benefit greatly if they (now I return to your remark) turn to the Path. Just turn and even that will bless you. Every time you turn, you will be endowed with more and more strength. But the turn has to be an intelligent turn and also a resolute turn. It is just not like this [Valentina turns Her head quickly from one side to the other]turn and then run. It is turn and hold!

Student: And without You, it is impossible. You are our Divine Mothera link to the Universal Mother. And I am very grateful to be in Your Presence.

Valentina: It is a reminder, Anna! You have to be reminded. I am just a link; every link is helping another link in the work of the Hierarchy of Light. And Hierarchy of Darkness is also working, as a matter of fact, is much more organized than Hierarchy of Light, because it is very easy to belong to Darkness and because there are many candidates to it. So Hierarchy of Darkness is working also very cooperatively "to help each other to degenerate" and to drag down every beautiful undertaking. It is the Cosmic Play and blessed are those who have a glimpse into it. It is not a joke!

Ah...I wish I could listen to Devi Mahatmayam all my life...every hour...each day... The best Cosmic Poetry...

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Om Sakti. Om Devi. [Whispering] Om Durga. [Recitation] Yes... The Devas or the Divine Forces were extolling the Mother or the Main

Force, the Primary Force of God. She indeed is everything in everything. It is only She. So "Be propitious, O Devi"...Please join me in that same invocation of the Devas. That is a very powerful Mantrathe prayer which invokes the Divine Force, which describes the Divine Force. Pay attention to that passage: "You are the power of virtue in the virtuous, and You are the punishment in the lives of the vicious."the same Force. It is very, very significant to ponder uponthat there is the Divine Justice; the same Grand Force of the Mother operates precisely and mathematically according to the deeds, to the thoughts, to the feelings of Her Children. It is She. It is the same Devi. She is everywhere.

She even is in the Asuras. She is! The distorted power which manifests itself as negativity is still Her Power! And the Divine Power manifests itself as rightness. So it is the Wonder of all wonders this Divine Forcethe Maha Maya. When She is manifested as Delusion or as the untruth. She is the Delusive Power. But what is wanted to understand is that this is the inscrutable Power of God. There is no other Power than this Power. And It manifests Itself from the highest of the high to the lowest of the low.

Now in order that you might propitiate that aspect of the Divine Mother which gives us Liberation, which gives us Vidya instead of Avidya, you ought, with all your might, with all

your force, join the Divine Forces, the Devas. And if you want to be smashed by that Power, which I hope you don't...you may join the Asuras... [Recitation]

With whomever the Devi is pleased, he is prosperous both in outer riches and in character, in the righteous and divine endeavour, in his Sadhana also. There is such expression as "Sadhana Sakti." It means that without Her Grace one is unable to perform his Sadhana! So whenever one is determined, whenever one does not fluctuate, whenever one is adamant on his path, it is only by the Grace of the Devi. The Devi's Grace... [Recitation]

For the Power of the Divine it is no trouble to destroy the evil immediately. She does not have to go through those horrible battles in order to empty the space from the Asuric invasions. But because the Show started and because it rotates, She goes into all those battles in order to give a chance (and this is most fascinating!) even to Her dire enemies! It is said that the one who takes death from the Hand of the Divine is saved! So She is saving Her own opposers! That is really...the Devi... [Recitation]

...Tomorrow we are starting the worship of the Benevolence of the Divine Mother as the charming, exquisite, subtle, refined, poetic, most beautiful Mother Lakshmi. "Sri" She is called the Consort of Vishnu. But how can you come to Her without first cleansing yourself with the Fire of Durga? How can you?! You will again parade only. You will demand from that Divine aspect everything all the bountiesthinking that you deserve it, whereas it is not possible. Without real, true repentance, you cannot even smell the Gloryyou cannot. You might claim it, but you will not have it. That is why I say that it is not only very difficult but it is impossible to come to Lakshmi "as if nothing has happened." It is impossible. So let something happen. And then we will prostrate to Maha Lakshmi tomorrow.

Let something happen now! Visualize that conflagration in your heart and in this room and know that this is the Divine Fire. It is not the ordinary fire. It is really the Consuming Blaze. It is the blaze of the scorching Power of the Divine Hand. It is an operation. Submit yourself to It. Give everything which is of no value into that Flame. It is not an offering to the Lord of something precious. It is an appeal to the Divine Mercy to scorch and to heal and to liberate you. On your own you cannot do it. And you never will... Om Sakti.

Let's have some music now. [Music and then meditation follow]

The Three Days of Lakshmi

October 9-11, 1975

Valentina enters the Sanctuary in a veritable Lakshmi form, identical to the Image at the altar, radiating great joy and beauty and with a breathtakingly beautiful smile, Her eyes shining with light. She holds a silver tray with coins.

Valentina: Now this is "Lakshmi's gelt." Put it over there by the other treasures. The Altar to Mother Lakshmi was laden with an abundance of flowers, fruits, jewels, cakes to be blessed! Then you can take a coin...everyone. You see, this is the outer, obvious glory of this earth; but the inner, the hidden, is the one which produces and suggests this outer. It is the autumnal thanksgiving, similar to the autumnal thanks following shortly after Yom Kippur. Now, similarly, after the very profound and austere three days of the worship of Kali, we give thanks for the other aspect of the Divine which sustains, protects, nourishes and blesses this earthly lifethe Adorable Lakshmi. That is what we are now at flowers, incense, love offerings to the Goddess of well being. Today, everyone should be hospitable to the neighbor, to the stranger, to the relative, to the dog, to the cat, to the plant, to whatever needs him. This is in honour of that aspect of the Divine which is benevolent.

During the three days of Durga, everyone was supposed to introspect and to be very vigilant and very careful about one's inadequacies to eliminate them, to remember the demands upon you from the Divine, to be able to offer to the Divine that which the Divine expects of you. It would be a mistake to think that three days expired and now in the coming three days (and one already passed) of the worship of the Goddess of Plenty, the Goddess of Benevolence, Beauty and Joy, you just have to forget your repentance and your strain and your prayers and simply rejoice materially. I warn you that this is the usual traditional concept. All traditions are materialistic. This is dense and defeats our purpose. So during Lakshmi observances, you are worshiping Her with every possible good quality which you cultivate within yourself.

Student: But supposingly, Guru, I honestly can't find any quality in me worthy to offer.

Valentina: Granted! You might not even have the worthy qualities, but during these three days you are attempting to practice whatever is lovely! It is to develop the qualities within yourself which make you acceptable to Lakshmi. So during this day, for instance, if you allowed yourself a frown, an irritable word, or even simply a sense of irritability, or maybe a lie, a disapproval, discontentment, any kind of aLakshmi movement within yourself, you are to immediately bring to the Altar of Mother Lakshmi your gentleness and your goodness. How do you do it? Not literally to come here and to prostrate yourself, although that won't hurt you, but by doing something or by thinking something or by writing something which is acceptable to Her.

Of course, the most acceptable to Lakshmi is the refinement of your whole being, the elegance, not only of your outer appearance, but of your inner char. acter, and that manifests itself in good will towards others, not as a compul. sion, "Oh, I better be good or else...Lakshmi!" No. But spontaneously. If you do not have spontaneity then of course the next best is [Smiling) "Oh I better."

Contemplate the attributes of the Goddesseither hospitality, or cheerful. ness, or elegance, or sweetness of disposition, or generosity. Supposing you, by nature, are not very giving. Well, here is your opportunity to worship the god. dess by giving, by starting to give. She is very generous, so you have to be gen. erous. You have to give during these three days, not in "gelt" alone (although that is also good) but in everythingjust give a big portion of your wellwishing to the whole world, to whatever you touch. And if possible, do not do it with compulsion; do it without "or else."

You can propitiate Her only through the qualities which She Herself hasand that is love, innocence, generosity, generosity, generosity, givingness. All these qualities She does have predominantly. and the ramifications of these qualities are so high that only the greatest poets and artists can a little bit perceive them, so intense and so superbly perfect in colour and depth and width. So it is not only the outer bounties but it is the inner bounties. Mother Lakshmi, the Devi...

...You know what? [In a childlike manner, pointing to a beautiful flower arrangement which has two candles in the center placed at the Altar) I want you to put the lights in these flowersthose two candles,I just want to see how they look. Now suppose you'll put off the other lights and then we will look at this arrangement and it will be very glorious. It is very right! [Pause) Barbara, what do you want to say? You look as if you do.

Student: How much I love You.

Valentina: that's what you wanted to say! That's good. [Pause] Now...look at our pumpkins! Are they some pumpkins! [To the student putting off the candles] Also this one. Just these two. Ah...See! Very, very good. Fine...

Student: I just wanted to say how much I adore the aspect of Beauty in Mother Lakshmi and how much You personify this tender beautiful Goddess.

Valentina: That is really wonderful. God bless you. Yes, the Force of benevolence is not an imagination. Without this Force of God, to tell you candidly, life on earth would be impossible. without all the big and little charms, without innocence, without sweetness, without beauty, it would be a prison really. So this Force of God, known in Hinduism as Mother Lakshmi, is a tremendous consolation, to say the least, Indeed, but you have to deserve Her bounties, not through bribing Her with all kinds of offerings. Nothing can buy Her because She owns everything! Student: Valentina. Mother Lakshmi must have blessed me because everything I want I usually get.

Valentina: /Smiles/ Don't attribute to Mother just your material prosperity.

Don't limit Lakshmil The benevolence of Lakshmi can be interpreted in a pagan way and it can be interpreted in a spiritual way. Mostly people are, of course, inclined to interpret it in a savage way. They give thanks because they are materially gratified and they want more gratification! So they say, "Thank you, give me a second portion please!" Student: What is a spiritual gratitude if mine is a savage one? Valentina: Humility constitutes spiritual gratitude! Spiritually speaking, we give thanks because we trust the protecting Love. Without that sustaining Force, we would not be able to live. We would sink in too many indulgences, too many temptations, as well as too many miseries. Further, spiritually speaking, without thanksgiving, you are not even entitled to the bounties, for consequently you pay penalty for the wrongly used privileges. It is spiritually considered a theft to take everything and to give nothing to the gods and to God. So this is how we come to Mother Lakshmi. Not in the sense of indulgence and not in the sense of gratification, but in the sense of the most humble gratitude. Student: Valentina, if I may, aren't we to enjoy this life, to have fun, it is pleasing.

Valentina: (With a twinkle) And why not? Sure, why not? Definitely. But joy goes together with the awesomeness and with the true appreciation. It is interesting that a person usually divides joy from spirituality, either you are joyous or you are spiritual! It is ridiculous. It is just the opposite. If you a spiritual, you are joyous, not carnal, not silly, just joyous!

Student: But I am neither spiritual nor joyous. Can I learn at least to be joyous?

Valentina: You cannot learn joy...you cannot learn joy! But you can acquire it. You can acquire it through very silent, concentrated observation of your self.

You can understand that there are many subtle movements within you and some are beautiful, and that alone can give you joy. Nothing else. Not the sunset and not the beautiful Lotus Eyes! But you can appreciate everything beautiful if you will rejoice at your own beauty. And that does not mean conceit, and that does not mean smugness and that does not mean silliness, of course, because there are a lot of very silly people who like themselves for nothing, fussing about their silliest appetites. That is, indeed, not joy; that is just silliness and giddiness. But joy comes when you can trace within yourself love, when you go deep and know that there is such thing as Flame. It gives you enormous joy. And then, everything else gives you joy, a flower, a smile, a graceful movement, [Smiling) a clumsy movement, everything! Because it is life. Because Lakshmi is behind. Because you are here for some purpose. You are here for the purpose to evolve, to learn, to fulfill. That is very joyous... Do not feign joy! Do not call aridity by other names! Aridity, stupidity, cupidity keep you away from spon. taneity and joy. Develop farsightedness see far beyond! [Silence) Without finding within yourself the deep love, you cannot rejoice.

Student: For myself, I feel joyous in excitement, when I am on the go.

Valentina: On the go? You mean active? A lot of people mistake excitement for joy. They are animated and they call it "joy." Far from it! They are only vital. ly responding to things that are pleasing, and mind you, just as vitally are weeping when the pleasing things are taken away from them. Cheap?!...Real joy is more costly than that. It perishes not even in the face of difficulties. Even when you are dissatisfied or disenchanted, your background is still the aware ness of the flame. If a person can have that flame in spite of circumstances inflation or no inflation, whatever! he knows what I am talking about. Sure

it is costly. Sure it is rare. But everything worthy is dear. And that is Lakshmi. Om Devi... Om Devi. She sure knows what I am talking about. That's all.

[Valentina momentarily sits back, gazes at the abundant Altarserenity and divine contentment radiate from Her] Ah...it's good...It is easy to be joyous when you are having everything you like to have, and even then, mind you, people have long faces because they want to have more, much more! They have everything they want, and yet somebody else has a little more they thinkand that "bugs" them; they cannot allow this. So really and truly, from these earthly joys and pleasures you cannot have permanent joy, because everything fades away, because you are dissatisfied whenever something does not go your way, and so forth and so on. But if you within yourself have the flame I am talking about, the flame which stirs you towards Beauty, Justice and Truth, this flame will nourish you here in your own heart. Then you are young regardless whether you are fifteen or fifty. You are always joyous, and very young. Student: Thank You, Guru. Just to look at You is to have joy!

Valentina: Okay, look! [Laughter] All right. Now the Devi Mahatmayam. And the two candles, the little twins, You can put off. And if someone feels that it is time to leave, I will give my daisies! They survive through the whole Observance. [A student starts to leave. Valentina stretches the daisies] And per haps something else. Do take your coins, Bella. Take your Lakshmi gelt. Just take as many as You want. [Student takes a handful of coins] Take more! Ai It's good. And may You be healthy, wealthy and wise. God bless my Bella. And the promised daisies! And the rest we will deliver to you special delivery... Now give us a little music please. [Music and then recitation of the Dev Mahatmayam follow]

Now let us contemplate the Powers of the Devi. As You see, She abidesWhatever virtue, whatever power, whatever glory, talent there is, it is all from She, that Energyin every human being in the form of all the virtues. Her. "Salutation to the Devi who abides in all beings in the form of faith." Fll add also! Whatever of Beauty there is, it is all from that Devi, from that mothcan perceive and conceive. Whatever of any kind of glory there is, it is all Hers. er of the Universe. To propitiate Her is to put at Her Feet whatever Beauty we She is also in the Dark Forces, but as a distorted Power, even as a disease is a blemish of your body but not your body!...

Concentrate deeply upon that virtue which speaks to you most, which you either have within yourself and want to develop or else which you admire in somebody else or else which you just know of and would love to have. These are actually the riches of which the

Devi talks and which She represents, Gold. jewels, flowers, incense, perfumes and all the bounties of this earthfruit and food and industry, whatever is only the gross manifestation of Her bounties. Her real bounties, I repeat it again and again, are in the acquirement of the qualities which She Herself possesses and represents. So if You want the real opulence, the real wealth, You are to now propitiate the Divine Mother with praising, with prayers, with love to Her. And think about the virtue You love most. Let it be love, let it be generosity, let it be truthfulness, let it be modesty, let it be humility, let it be courage whatever You adore most, calmly think about. And what we think, that we become. God bless you.

Om Devi. Om Maha Lakshmi.

[Valentina enters the Sanctuary. Beautiful red rose in hand. Tape recording is being played. The tape is stopped.)

Valentina: [Spontaneously and beaming/ I'm thrilled! Hearing my own voice, makes me think of Ambhika who multiplied Her Being into many other beings... Those who were not at the beginning of Navaratri know nothing what I am talking about. So let them guess! A good riddle...

Student: I am a volunteer, ready to solve the riddle!

Valentina: Sssshh...don't be too enthusiastic. Leave your elucidations till later, for now is the Devi Mahatmayam. [Recitation follows]

[After recitation] Just today I received a letter from a person who says, "I was praying so much to the Divine Mother." and then he quotes some swami that "if one is sincerely praying to the Divine Mother, She will grant everything." Now, there is a prayer and there is a prayer! I hope that the just recited passages from the Devi Mahatma make it clear that the Devas, or the Divine Beings are intensely devoted and totally concentrated upon every form, every manifestation, every Power of the Divine Mother! So definitely prayers like theirs cannot be without answer, and throughout Devi Mahatmayam, it is revealed that the Divine Mother comes to rescue those who pray to Her. But my Children, it absolutely does not mean that because You have some kind of a frustration and say half. heartedly, "Mother please do this, that and that for me," that it will be immedi. ately done This is not

only naive but is rather blasphemous! You cannot compel the Divine to fulfill your fancies. It is ridiculous. Really, the petitions are not fulfilled unless the petitioner is able to think more of the Divine than of himself. You can pray in a primitive, ordinary way when you are in great need of something. The Divine, by the way, knows more than You what is your need. When one is praying ardently, then one has a right to use this word "prayer."

There is no ego left at all. There is only the heart which beats. either with weep. ing or adoration Then You can ask anything at all. You even do not ask it on your behalf. It is just that your whole being is pulsating your need which then definitely is answered. But how dare you, if overwhelmed by lust or ambition, or confusion dictate: "Mother, come on, quick. I desire this, that and that." The idea!... [Silence, and then, in a heartstirring chant," Salutations to You O Devi Naraaaayani...." Don't ask anything! Just salute... Ponder upon how the Devas are prostrating with salutations to the Mother of the World. What immense humility they have!

And please, they are the great forces; they are the divine beings! And even they, they do not beg Her do this, that and that "or else!" They do not command Her as almost every smart aleck does. No they don't. They prostrate to Her again and again.

Student: It is so beautiful I wish I could pray like that,. How else can we propitiate the Devi?

Valentina: Through control.

Student. Can You specify the control?

Valentina: Now, for instance, when You are worshiping the Devi You should perform austerities, either physical or mental. Now let's specify, let's say mental fasting. Mental fasting is far more important than physical fasting. Physical fasting is not always advocated, and especially in our times when there is so much work and so little rest. But the mental fast is a must. Mental fast consists of abstinence from evil thoughts, from evil emotion, from revengefulness, from anything which is barricading you from the Divine Sakti, especially Lakshmi. Lakshmi is such tenderness and such exquisite Beauty that to approach Her without selfpurification and austerity and acute vigilance is to offend Her,

to slight the Devi, is to raise a sword against Her, is to be the Asura! Student: It sure is not a joke.

Valentina: Indeed it isn't. We are not gathering here for entertainment.

Student: And yet., Guru, You do entertain us and I am profusely grateful for it, for I wouldn't survive without Your charm, Your humour , Your play, Your aesthetics. Valentina: Well, well. I really appreciate this remark. And I shall share a little secret with you, if at all it is a secret, for I am inclined to think you are not all that dull to understand it. The point is that you all are very, very dear people who now are in transition. You have reevaluated your values, you have chosen the Path towards high values, but simultaneously you lost your spontaneity and naturalness. Few of you are allowing yourselves to be relaxed, cheerful, witty and happy for fear of losing gravity, of becoming paltry or disrespectful. Sometimes when I take a glance at your long faces, exaggeratedly solemn atmosphere, I feel like waking you up and shaking you! Part of my "entertainment" using the word you picked up! is precisely for the purpose of reducing this exaggerated and not always pleasing rigidity. But I didn't mean joy, fun and spark when I referred to undesirability of entertainment. What I meant is that the Divine should not be taken lightly. It is horrible to pretend and to merge into the outer aspect of observances parading as a devotee. We are here for search of higher life, not for asserting our usual standards under the new pretenses!

Student: We see this all over the world. It is amazing what goes on all this "ochre robe" masquerade and the almost comical personages in socalled yoga centers, I've been around and...wow!

Valentina: Well. You won't have this element here. I hope you don't miss it?!

[laughter]

Student: Tell me, what do You think about the distortions?

Valentina: You ought to understand that man is a poor instrument, not sufficiently developed to carry through any great religion or divine idea. The sages give something

enormous. Through the sage and saint Mother works. Through the masses, Maya works. The Divine is patiently allowing the failure...till man is ready for the fulfillment. Whenever there is a new turn in spiritual idealismknow for sure that Mother is testing. The clowns appear, the sages disappear.

And back to your remark yes, I do "entertain" you, you are right. But it is not done compulsorily or else it would not be charming, wouldn't you think So.... I not so much entertain as enjoy the Sakti! I love fun, but I give it to the Devi first and then to you!....

Student, Guru, it is so truethe innocence, the vitality, the realness and purity of Your play with us is so overwhelming. And it also is so true how. You depicted us as being in transition. Will we ever overcome that stage of dullness, shyness and egoconsciousness?

Valentina: You certainly will. In fact, I respect...your respect! How much more dignified and worthy is your behaviour in comparison with those who bring with themselves the atmosphere of laissez faire.... Cutting the jokes of doubtful taste, being well at ease in the atmosphere which is above their heads, allowing themselves familiarity which breeds contempt, and other such similar characteristics of the worldly man who enters the Sanctuary are veritably a painful sight. Thus, a certain rigidity for fear of committing a faux pas is a sign of inner decency and is inevitable in the transitionary stage of the aspirant. Bear with yourselves....

Student:...As You do with us?

Valentina: It is not "bearing"in my case, it is "caring!"

Student: How to accelerate spontaneity which is natural in You and a task for us?!

Valentina: Don't miss your spiritual opportunity Every night on Lakshmi night we are meditating upon the increase of the Divine qualities. Now let us join together in that meditation. Select the quality acceptable to the Devi, this time, Mother Lakshmi. And, if I may, I will suggest not the charm, etc., but the quality which includes all disciplines. All of you should project the same yearning for this quality! And then carry the vibration of this night into your lifenot to dismiss it, not to forget it, not to spill it. So how can we call

this attempt in one word, someone please tell me, and I will see if that corresponds to what I mean.

Student: Remembrance.

Valentina: Remembrance. Good child. That is right! Remembrance is the word, is the quality, is the most needed awareness.... I feel now that the vibrations are rising. Everybody is more sincere than when you came here, more serious, more calm. So let us remember this heightening of the vibrations, the heightening of your consciousness.

Be prepared: the Asuras will pull you right and left the moment you will leave the Sanctuary.

Student. But why should it be so?

Valentina: It is a strange phenomenon! One becomes thicker and thicker inside the moment one is using his eyes, his nose, his tongue, the way the outer world suggests it. You see the sleepy, hypnotizedintoflesh people, you see the objects, you forget the higher, subtler impressions completely. You will come to your families, you will enter the street, you will perform your job, and everywhere will be provocation. And you will come one grade lower, two grades lower, three grades lower, till you will forget. So Remembrance is the quality necessary, remembrance of that which brings you face to face with the Divine, remembrance of that aspect of yourself which is real. [Pause] Now come on, join me; love the Remembrance, ponder it.

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[Following evening. Sanctuary]

Valentina:... Third night of the worship of Maha Lakshmi. Pause] Very benevolent, very auspicious very beautiful. [Silence]

The nine days of the worship of the Divine Mother, it is said, are very dear to Her. During these days one can become a different man, a different person, if one takes it very seriously. In these nine days, man of heightened consciousness can live the Cosmic Drama of purification, of that which follows cationthe quiet, the prosperity of spirit, mind and body and consequently the Wisdom the culmination, the Knowledge. Definitely an ordinary man cannot live the Cosmic Truth in its full significance and glory. But these Observances, year after year, broaden your consciousness and make you more fit to understand at least intellectually, and those who are very devoted are blessed with realization of the operation of Cosmic Forces within and outside. Student: Last night You mentioned about remembrance as a special virtue.

Valentina: Well, good that you remember! But the point is to remember what you receive, to absorb it, to practice it, to raise your vibrations. How many accept the Divine Guidance and how many hear? So in specially assigned time for the worship of the Divine Mother, of the Mother of the Universe, of the Dynamic Aspect of God, it is very wonderful to increase your capacity to listen, to receive, to REMEMBER!....

Student: How to approach that Lakshmi Sakti. What are Her signs?

Valentina: All life's currents are Hers! Feel acutely the emergency of the time! Notice the striking contrasts of extreme wealth with extreme poverty, extreme comforts of any kindcomforts of health, comfort of friendship, comfort of any kind of achievement, with terrible discomfort of dejection of being crippled in mind, body and soul. Indeed these contrasts can be neutralized only through the benevolence of Lakshmi. That is Her Natureto neutralize, to soothe, to give inspiration and to help. But you ought to refine your whole being. Feel for Her children. She cannot be reached by callous heart. More empathy!..

[Silence, and then after the recitation from the Devi Mahatmayam]

...Indra is one of the Divine Forces which is strong; enough to govern other forces. Here are enumerated many forces which were overpowered by the opposers, by the ones who protest against the Divinenamely, the forces of ignorance, the dark forces. Sometimes, when the Devas are not vigilant enough, the darkness overpowers even them; not only the human being, but even divine beings are attacked. These particular AsurasSumbha and Nisumbhaare the most powerful dark forces. And I told you many times that Asuras

are not necessarily just insignificant and disgusting evil forces. They can be powerful in their prowess, talents and skills as well and as much as in their nastiness. But indeed, they use their powers for evil and selfish ends only.

They are strong enough to temporarily overpower even the gods! Mark well temporarily, for only Good triumphs in the long run.

[After recitation]

Student: Am I right to assume the position of Indra is not all. that secure?

Valentina: You are right. The position of Indra actually is not the permanent position; it is a "temporary position." In other words, in Cosmos, just as in our lit the world here on earth, there are various degrees of excellence. One can attain to the position of Indra through valorous life, through austerities, through fine achievements, through much brilliance, through reliability and dedication to the Divine. All the divine forces are the radiations of God. In this particular instance the Asuras overpowered the Divine Government and took the position of Indra, (The ruler of Devaloka). The other gods mentioned are Varuna the Divine ruler of the element of Water, the Sun, the Moon, Kubera, the force of wealth and opu lence; Agni, the force of Light, Fire, and many other forces were overpowered by darkness, and the ignorant but powerful Asuras took over. [Recitation]

...The Asuras robbed the Devas and all the treasures are in their possession now, just like in this world. So now they want the Devi Herself! There is no limit to the impudence and lust of the Asuras. And that is really the most tragicomical aspect of every ignorant dark force. It becomes extremely arrogant and it does not realize that God is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent and there is no way of overcoming and overpowering Him. The Devas are the only ones who have the access to the Divine Force or Mother of the World. The Asuras have to be killed because there is no right for the evil and there is no life for the evil. Sooner or later they are going to be slain, all of them, but it is a long process.

...All I can say now is let's pray so that they will perish quicker than it is expected. And we shall end in meditation, a special Lakshmi meditation. During these three days we are meditating upon the acquirement of special virtues. Last night it was a collective

meditation upon the remembrancethe remembrance of the high spirit here, the remembrance of the recitation from the most magnificent and powerful Scriptures, the remembrance of your higher Selfabove all, the remembrance of the Devi. Remember!

Student: Shall we meditate on Remembrance tonight, too?

Valentina: Always start with that most spiritual quality! Before praying or contemplatingremember your Highest. Bow to the Supreme, remembering as much as you can the Glory and the Perfection of God!... Then we can choose any special topic.

Perhaps now we shall collectively ponder upon the fearlessness. Everyone, it is said, who is listening with all his heart to the recitation of the Devi Mahatmavam is acquiring some fearlessness because the Devi shows such Courage and such Power, such Absolute Fearlessness that it blesses the one who prays to Her with the hymns. It is said that the one who dedicates himself to the Path of GodRealization should fight against fear. Fear is indeed a dire enemy of an aspirant.

Let us now meditate upon fearlessness, or if you want to concretize it, on the opposite of fearnamely courage and daring. Daring! Spiritual daring is miles apart from arrogance. Sometimes people think that they are daring when they are impudent. Asuras think they are daring. When I say "daring", I say [intensely) to dare to take the Cross and follow Him. That is what I mean. Om Sakti!

Have a little music first. [Music and silence]

[And then, Valentina): By the way, one of the most efficient ways to combat fear is a spontaneous compassion. Think of the needs of others give yourself freely you will dissolve your fears!

Now please collectively join me in my prayer to Divine Mother in Her form of Lakshmi, the Patroness of everybody who is in need! I pray for the hungry. Looking at that lavishly decorated Altar which is literally bending from opulence and beauty, I pray for the hungry ones. I pray for the sufferers. I pray to the Divine Mother to bless the world, to help the

world to overcome this terrible Asuric invasion, for everywhere there is the dark force. I pray to the Divine Mother for the world...which is Hers. Om Devi. (Silence)

[After long silence) Whatever is here, [Indicating the food offerings at the Altar] You should take some to the black people through Edie and maybe some to the convalescent people, wherever. It is not that it will feed them, but it will bring them great luck, that's for sure.... and it will make you less selfish, less frightened, more strong...Oh! Sakti!

The Three Days of Saraswati

October 12-14, 1975

Student: Thank You for the really fantastic experience of watching You these six days! Now I am preparing for the beholding of Your White Garment! What are Saraswati's orders?

Valentina: God bless your commencement, for commencement is verily Saraswati Sakti. So start auspiciously! Above all, She is Enlightenment, Purity and Wisdom. You can propitiate Her with poetry; you can propitiate Her with any skill rightly directed. If it is a tool in your hands and you are repairing your car, you can dedicate that tool to Her. You must commence your day with Her Name on your lips. Then only you are enhancing your Sadhana. Just as you were (I hope all of you were) partaking of Durga purgation and of Lakshmi's loveliness and characterbuilding1 hope these three days and nights will be the beginning, the commencement of some spiritual life. It is very difficult to have spiritual life [Smiling) without being spiritual, is it not?! But we shall commence....

We shall go now to the... [Chants softly] "Salutations to the Devi"I do not want to hear about the bloodshed of the Battle tonight. It is Her Purity and Sweetness and you have to praise Her. [Recitation of the Praises of the Devi follows) [And then Valentina) I remind you that the eulogy to Lakshmi is also the eulogy to Saraswati as well as to Durga. It is all the same, whether She creates, sustains or dissolves! Creates or begins that is She, the White One; sustains or protects it is She, the multicoloured One; dissolves it is She, the Blueblack One. So it is the same One, only [Valentina moves Her hands from side to side, up and down/ She goes this way, this way, this way, this way. So tonight we shall meditate upon the One who creates, who begins, who enlightens, who is the symbol of Knowledge.

You see how many books you brought (Glancing towards the books laid at the Altar by the students/all your favorite books. Your offerings in the form of spir itual literature, books, symbolize the Devi's Knowledge. Your offerings in the form of these splendid white roses and lilies symbolize Her Calmness, Serenity, Purity. So maybe we shall join together in meditation upon these qualities?! Crystal clear, whitebluenot the "Durga Blue," not the blackblue, but whiteblue, very transparent. Very cool, but not cold. Very refreshing, but not stimulat ing. Very beautiful, but not sensuous. Mother...Saraswati...Sakti...Devi. [Silence and meditation]

You have to feel the essence of Saraswati, not to think about it, but to feel it. The essence of every Sakti has to be felt, consequently realized. To talk about everything is very easy, to think about everything is very easy, but to realize everything is very difficult. I hope it will be transmitted to you tonight to some degree that Saraswati Sakti stands for spiritual Love. All Saktis are Love in varjous colours, various intensities, for God is Love. Now, the spiritual Love differs entirely from human love. One may think, "Well, isn't there at least an ingredient of human love which can approach the Saraswati Sakti?" Much as I think and much as I feel about it, I cannot say there is. But I shall console you! Human warmth plus the divine purity equals that which I call Saraswati Sakti, the spiritual Love. In other words, human unregenerated passions cannot be called love, can they?! You cannot expect the Divine to come to your sultry and smelly cellars; you ought to raise your quarters! It is like going up and high, and high and wide, and leaving downstairs beneath everything which is heavy, restless, dim, cloudy, impure. The more you feel that Saraswati Sakti, the less you are attached to human beings; the more you love them, the less you care for their unreliable, unsteady personalities.

Of course, the human, passionate heart immediately will argue, "How come? How can we love and not care?" But note the word "unreliable!" Human outer personality is altogether phony, so why care for it and expect others to care for your "makebelieves? Raise your unhealthy, insincere pretenses into the truth of your being, then... "care." But forget the deceptions. Care not for petty argument, for petty assertiveness, for petty jealousy, for petty interferences into things which are none of your business. It is aloofness of special kind, very noble aloofness. It is "live and let live," on a very high level. You live on a very high level and let everybody live on whatever level they may choose; let them do what they wantnone of your business. But indeed it is your business not to become inordinately attached to that which is none of your business!

You may again, from human point of view, say, "How come, then all will start doing atrocious things?" [Smiling] They will do it anyhow, regardless what you think about them, what you want from them. But you are different, and if you are different...ah, they will be also different. It is just not to assert yourself in whatever feeling, neither in the holierthanthou, nor in permissivenessnot to become a selfappointed saint... [Musingly] but to become a Saraswati's Child. Very beautiful transparent, white! So now we will join in meditation again. Hopefully it will not be abstract, but it will be concrete. Abstract things are of no help to you. Everything has to be concrete. You may again argue, "What are the abstract things for?!" Just to look at them and to know that they exist. But concrete things are to be practiced, to be realized, to be owned. So let's own the Saraswati's... Love. Let's not think about it, no, but let's raise our consciousness to such a degree that we will allow Sakti to enter us.

Technically speaking (it is all business, it is absolutely no theory here), it is to make yourself quiet, no restlessness whatsoever. And I hope that some of you, or maybe many of you were silent all this day for it is Sunday silent day for people who were with me. And I am immensely glad that we break our silence by the discourse dedicated to Saraswati. How most auspicious! Saraswati stands for both Silence and correct speech. You slight this Sakti of God if you do not talk right and you cannot talk rightly if silence is unknown to you. A very controlled and very pure tongue you have to haveand very beautiful silence. So technically speaking, if you are able to control your tongue and if you are able to be very calm, you will attract that Sakti.

In our meditation, I told you recently, we attract that which we are ourselves. Now, sitting without motion is very easy; for most people it is achievable. But it does not at all mean that you are quiet inside. So if man sits down quietly and thinks all kinds of restless, uncontrolled thoughts he attracts restless, uncontrolled, lower entities only from the astral spheres. If he sits down quietly and is very detached from all his affairs, very sweetly disposed, prayerfully opening himself, he attracts precisely that Saraswati Sakti who is transparent, who is love without attachment, who is adorably sweet, innocent, pure and...powerful...

... We contemplate now Love of Saraswati Sakti, spiritual Love which has no sentimentality, which has no demands, which has not a trace of human passion. You may again say, "But how dry!" No, it is not. It is very pure. It cannot he dry, for Saraswati stands for such manifoldness that dryness and stiffness are absolutely out it is impossible! She is very subtle and very full of Knowledge. And when there is Knowledge and Wisdom, there is no dryness. Dryness is only in intellectuality, which has no Wisdom. Wisdom is

full of many nuances, very many nuances. One cannot be wise and yet inflexible. So Saraswati has all nuances of the subtlest rainbow...very beautiful! Om Sakti....

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[Valentina enters the Sanctuary as Chopin's "Berceuse" is played. Turning to the student in charge of the music]

Valentina:.... Whose rendering of the "Berceuse" did you play just now? It was very well playedwho was that?

Student: Rubinstein.

Valentina: It was good but it was just the way...it should be played. Conime il faut! Now please play Josef Hofmann's rendering of the same "Berceuse," [9] Referring to the legendary pianist of the beginning of the XXth century, some of whose records were preserved.

just for Saraswati and me. Hofmann can be played only on Saraswati day, for anybody!... And he is listening to me above and he says, "Bravo, Valentina, I we cannot take him casually. Hofmann plays it the way it cannot be played...by appreciate it; I appreciate the right audience" [Laughter) You sure have it! Now, before you will give it to me, you give a sentence from Rubinstein. Rubinstein is tiptop, very, very the way it should be very, very sensitive. But Hofmann is impossible! Impossible as a matter of fact, unacceptable if it could be anybody trying to copy him. It seems he is entirely different from every musician who ever existed. I dare say, he is the king and the others are the subjects (Smiling). All right, the king of the keyboard... [The recordings of Rubinstein and Hoffman are listened to.]

...He /Rubinstein always plays with good control and yet much Ivricism. He always remembers that the romantic music without the classical foundation is not too high. So when he plays Chopin, for instance, he plays him without the exaggerationsthe fault of so many even renowned pianists! So all the rubato, all the permissiveness, is very well controlled by Rubinstein. This particular little jewel is beautifully, lyrically rendered. Whereas Hofmann is to such an extent concentrated upon the music and to such an extent is above all the technique possible and impossible (for him technique is neither

obstacle nor means it is just (With happy voice) a new dimension!) that he is in music only. And he allows himself, not the trespassing against the rules and principles of nobility, but he is bringing the breeze of the otherworldness altogether. Such spontaneity can be afforded only by geniuses. He goes suddenly into the acceleration which, I tell you, if anybody else would try, would alarm us! "How can?! Why should?! How dare?! Pretense!" But no! When he does it, it is just like coming down from Devaloka and saying, "That's the way we dance and sing there." And that's all....

To the "conductor"/ Take Hofmann's last bit, just last bit.... Attention! Saraswati talking! Listen attentively so you can understand what I was referring to! [Valentina sits totally absorbed in the music)...Now listen please to this... the way he repeats the nine last notes. Say it again.... [Music]

Student: Guru, thank You for that exquisite poetry. When Guru said the "breeze" in terms of the Hofmann piece, that's how I felt it. The Hofmann one was like a great...?

Valentina: Reverberation!

Student: Yes Ma'am., a freedom....

Valentina: Freedom: Yes. It is this something which cannot be explained, which cannot be put into any kind of description. As a matter of fact, it was too odd, unusual, daring for all our concepts of music, and only he can afford it; it is not of these dimensions! The Hofmann music is, ah...how could I put it? Almost a protest against all the rules! You cannot compare even Rubinstein's class, great class in our standards, and yet when the two are together, Rubinstein is almost...well conventional, ordinary.

Second student: Right that is it exactly. That is what was so incredible to see, to see that enormous.... how can I call it?

Valentina: Flow! Now look, this is a little berceuse, a little lullaby. And what does he do? He is violent sometimes! It is not the breeze in the sense of the transparency and coolness; he is violent, because there is such thing as the undercurrent in the breeze and

he catches even this! Then the temperature of the air is changed, he catches this! No! It is really not for words! [Short silence) Now give me something else.

[The music of Fritz Kreisler is played. Valentina, with a delightful air around Her] Our music these three days we specifically dedicate to Saraswati. Kreisler is also a rarity and is allowed only on Saraswati night, for if you listen casually to these relicsyou will lose the deep appreciation. And in spite of that impossible recording, it still is perfect. Yes.... So, Mother Saraswati is quite pleased with the offerings of Her best Children[smiling] Hofmann, Valentina and Kreisler...who adore Her art of sound above everything, above any other art.

Yes.....Saraswati. She is playing through every great artist, She is talking through every great word, She is loving through every great heart. But because human mind is very imperfect, very limited and of shortdistance memory, it forgets Her. Even of the greatest of Her Children it is true. Except the greater than the greatest, like Ramakrishna, who was an artist and who is (yes, not was!) also a Divine Child, who is entirely absorbed in Her, who cannot could not, would not, will not betray Her even for one second. Even for one second? [With a sparkle in Her eye] For one second He did several times, and then He would say, [in the voice of the Divine Child] "Mother, it's because I forgot Thee. I went another direction and I fell." Literally! He fell and broke His hand. Then at another occasion He did something else when He forgot Her, and some other trouble happened. Ramakrishna was coexisting with Her, not only like this divine fiddler during the exquisite moments of creativity expressing his Godgiven genius, but every second...every second...every second. Can you imagine that? So that's it..... Her other great Children forget Her, because they are mortals, they are not divine. But they become divine during their moments of celestial inspiration.

Student: It is...really hard to imagine that in our world of prose and afflictions there is a tiny corner of Valentina's Devaloka. You make alive and celestial every thing and everybody! Who would talk of Kreisler and Hofmann the way You do?

Valentina: Laughs Really?! Is it so unusual to love beauty?! But perhaps you are right; It is said that man gets used to everything, becomes blasé, does not appreciate the gifts of gods.... Well, I am most enchanted by those who do intense, who are the favourites of the gods! And now that we listen to the music not forget, who do not take for granted, whose appreciation of divine feelings is of these two wondermusicians, let me again raise the toast in their honour! That divine element was definitely in Kreisler and Hofmann. They both were very loved...and that is also the Sakti's boon, in this instance definitely

Lakshmi. And although I am worshipping now Saraswati, I may as well switch to the Lakshmi aspect in this particular instance. The Divine Saktis are interrelated. We cannot very well make the line of demarcation. I go by feeling, by intuition, by unmistakable thrill within myself which indicates the presence of either this or that Sakti.

What occurred to me, and that is what I want to utter now that it is the presence of Lakshmi always when there is music. It is a strange feeling. Although I was eulogizing always Saraswati whenever we were intensely dedicating ourselves to the artsMother Lakshmi is always pleased with it. The process of listening the way I am listening is absolutely, positively connected with Lakshmi. That is for your information....

Saraswati is in charge of arts, of compositions, of inspirations, of industriosity in the arts and technique, everything. But the pleasure, the Bhoga of art, is Lakshmi! [Smiling charmingly] She just told me that, and I tell you that. That's all! Fair enough?...

[And then vividly) As to Durgadrums! She sure destroys the pseudoarts. She says, "This is not art; remove the label; this is offense to art. This is not worthy of giving such a resplendent name as 'art' to such rubbish!" [Guru claps Her hands as if disposing of what is unworthy] When I shout, "Shhhhhh!" it means that Durga does not like it; otherwise, She says, "Lakshmi will not enjoy it." So better!... Well, come, Kreisler again [Music]

There are very microscopical amount of the poets of violin, or piano, or word, or life. Fritz Kreisler is a poet of his instrument to such an extent that it is breathtaking! And we have only few recordings left of this genius. And not even genius!... It is just the poetry of a genius!

Please excuse our recordings; they are not good. They are very old. But learn to listen to the essence. Student plays the same selection of Kreisler as before No, now the other selection please. Kreisler of course. Music

...Another thing it is a sad case to listen to Kreisler's compositions or his repertoire performed by anybody who is not up to him, up to his simplicity, spontaneity, charm and exquisiteness. It becomes unbearably overdone, not nice. He, in spite of his colossal virtuosity, often preferred very simple music It is just a fiddler, [Smiling] but what a fiddler. [Kreisler's music is played) [To the student who arrived late] Now, Joseppi, you missed

Fritz Kreisler but you still see me. Come here. [Student enters]... Kreisler's wife summarized; she said, [Imitating the endearing Austrian accent) "Fgitz is a vegy talented boy, but he would have been a ggeat musician if he would pgactice." (Laughter] So part. ly his very simple "rep" is due to the fact that he didn't like to practice?! No, he exercised laboriously and tenaciously in youth and the virtuosity probably "clung" to him. His virtuosity is entirely amazing and with practicing and without practicing he could really touch almost anything.

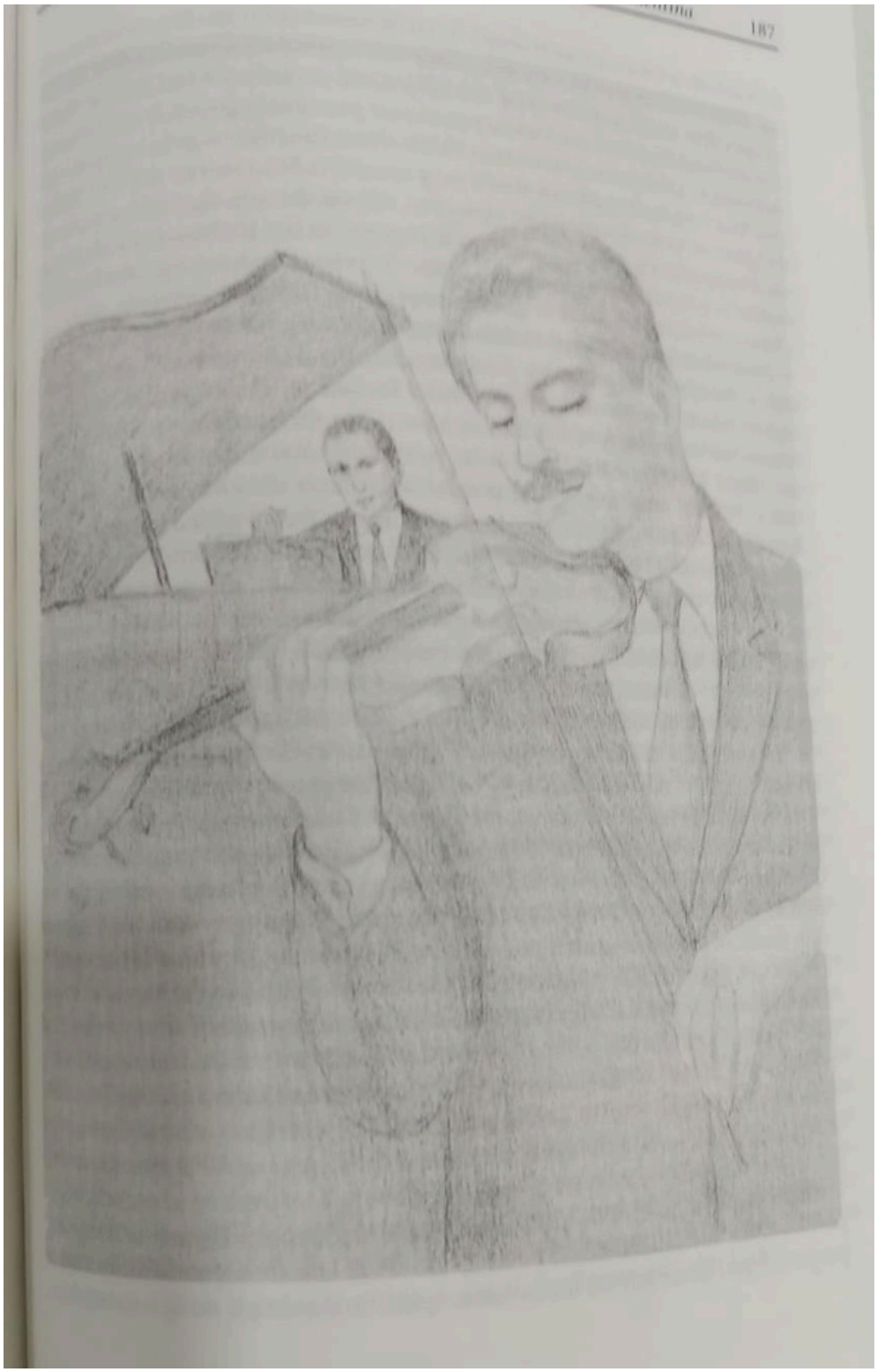
...I gave to several people today almost...almost embarrassingly unassuming and simple advice. "Embarrassingly" just like for the wife of Fritz it was [Miming her accent) embarrassing that he is playing such nonsense! Now before I will tell you that which I said to others, I'll first finish about our Fritz, You see, jokes aside, only the great people can allow themselves the simple things because only they can derive greatness out of the simplest and the most unspectacular. Now who in the three worlds would play those little musical pieces without boring...me! [Smiling] I don't know. Nobody, except Fritz Kreisler.

The fool thinks that great simplicity is not great for it is so "easy to be like that."

But the great ones are "like that" because...they are great! And not only because they are compassionately stepping down and trying to please everybody and hide themselves because they are so great that they do not want to embarrass [Smiling] the small ones; no, it is not at all this way! It is just because they are great!

Someone sent to me a record of Beethoven's Sonata for violin and piano played by Rachmaninoff and Fritz Kreislera team! I once told you about that very favourite of my records and every time I have an opportunity to make it a background of my love and thought, feeling and meditation, I take this. This incomparable rendering of Beethoven was all the time, not playing, but talking to me, and through me to the spheres. You see, you've got to be a poet to recognize poetry...and we were a team. [Laughter) It was absolutely, incredibly, fantastically perfect...and now Rachmaninoff came to my mind. He indeed personifies entire humility while accompanying this miraculous violinist. Often the best accompa nist pushes and shows if he is the "best." Not Rachmaninoff! [With Smile] He just hides [charmingly) even as Siva!...humbly and elegantly, divinely! [Pause)

Student: May I interrupt the flow? How about that advice You promised? I'm all ears. I don't let You forget it.



Valentina: Okay, I won't forget it; promise is a promise. My comment was upon all the hangups during these Saraswati nights! Can you imagine sucht cannot. But it did happen.

And the advice and actually the fact itself is that if you are thinking about the highest you cannot practice the lowest. It just becomes impossible. Of course, you cannot think about the highest only because I tell you. You forget all the time, that's your specialty. But you can develop one of the greatest virtues the right aspiration. If you develop the right aspiration what happens? That right aspiration brings to you the Highest, as much as you aspire, in proportion to it. So the motto is: you cannot practice the lowest if you are contemplating the Highest. Simple? Yes. Difficult? For fools, yes. Now, what is the Highest? Definitely it is not the highest mountain; it is not the highest building; it is not even psychologically the highest position; it is not the highest talent; it is not the music of Fritz Kreisler of which I just talked! These heights are very nice to think and to have, but they are not the Highest, they are...high! The Highest is Invisible yet perceivable. You think about the Invisible Realm, you are attracting it. The Invisible is stronger than the visible. Why does Kreisler play like he does? Because he derives it from the Invisible. He cannot derive it from the visible. Those musicians who try to get a gimmick from the visible, from the audible, those are the ones who are boring and meaningless and fruitless Well.... So when you are, as an aspirant world, aspiring towards the Highest in the sense of the Invisible Grandeur of the Force of God, what happens? The Forces become your companions and do not allow you to fall. But when you only talk about it or read about it or listen about it, they do not approach you because you are not interested in them; you are only interested in the theory. Anything can be quoted. Even the music of Kreislerwell, there are people who listen to it and say, "Oh, it is cute" (a nerve!), or something like that "It's charming, it's great," and forget about it. And there are people who are completely immersed in and know every nuance of his playing. So those know every nuance of his playing only those are even as he himself. And only those can commune with him with his music or with music of any other great musician, or with a painting, or with a flower or with a sculpture, a movement, whatever. Now the very same thing in the Invisible world. This becomes for you a living reality, you are communing with it. It is not that you are escaping from the obligations towards the life on earth at all. You are perform ing your obligations on the background of your communication with the Invisible. Your very obligation to earth becomes fulfilled. But what kind of an obligation are you fulfilling and how faithful are you to your mission on earth if you all the time are either despairing or sulky or disappointed or angry or weak or whatever impediments you might have?! Why does this happen? Because you do not have the sup port from the Invisible. Because you rely too much either on yourself or on other people but you never rely on the Invisible Spirit. So the simple thing is to heighten, Forces of God. And in proportion that you can think and remember again that to increase your thoughts, your recollections, aspirations, your love of the Invisible word "remember"the higher Reality, in that proportion you are arresting the lower within yourself. This is very, very, very encouraging is it not? Consequently the simplest thing that is what I said, "embarrassingly simple" if you think about God you cannot be bad. charmingly That is simple enough for everybody?

Your conduct becomes good; you just cannot do bad things! Just as you would not be able to do something bad to the one whom you adore, you really cannot, you cannot. Although people often do it, but then they do not adore. But if one happens to adore, to really love...ah...one is tippytoeing. one is carrreful. Very careful. Not because one is afraid to lose the beloved this only very jealous, possessive people but because one is hurt bevond measure if something inappropriate is done in the presence of the one for whom one has reverence more than for anything else in all the worlds taken together. That is simple. When you love, you cannot commit a faux pas, you cannot. So that is all. [Short silence) Of course everyone would want to ask, "How can love like that?" [Valentina suddenly bursts into laughter] I don't know. Just like asking Fritz Kreisler, "How can you play like that?" He will say, "I don't know. My wife says I don't practice. [Laughter] On Saraswati's nights and days there should be much music; there should be much love, much poetry and much purity, very much purity. You cannot order purity during the three nights and then be impure again. Neither can you have purity during the three nights and days if you do not have it during the whole year. Yet on special occasions when the flow of Saraswati or Lakshmi or Durga or Christ or Moses (every day there is some flowcatch it) when the specific vibration is very strong, then those virtues which you are practicing every year become blessed by that divine flow and they reinforce you and you really become invincible, very strong. You become verily the weapon against the asuras, even as it is said in Devi Mahatmayam: "Those who seek refuge in Me are themselves giving refuge to others." Those who seek the refuge of the Devi Herself become a refuge to others. you see? Because they are blessed with Her Powers. That is what it is.

[Turning to a student] If you will put off this extra light now [Large candle on the Altar), I shall see Saraswati better. That's right now there is the proper light. We shall contemplate now the Saraswati Sakti, the Sakti of Purity, of immense Purity. Purity safeguards us from almost everything dangerous. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." And when you see God. what is it to be afraid of and what danger can you not overcome! But the heart has to be very pure. Let us contemplate the purity. Imagine your heart being completely cove ered with silvery Light, silveryblue light. Very pure, which is purer than the snow, purer than the whitest of white. It is just divinely pure. And know that you can always call on that Light within yourself, the Saraswati Sakti Light...

You can have a little music and contemplate this Light..... [Music and silence)...Now Devi Mahatmayam. [Recitation] ...The Devi can assume any appearance. Human imagination, even when

most vivid is unable to perceive the Cosmic Grandeur, the Omnipresence of God! The Devi, simultaneously can be anything. Here She was unsurpassingly beautiful to such an extent that the Asuras would not be without Her "because we are the lovers of the greatest and the most beautiful objects. Everything beautiful should be ours." Grab! And here in the next moment She appears as the other Cosmic Force, as Force which is dreadful, and not only dreadful, but also very unsightly. Why? Because She is personifying now the Cosmic Wrath, the Cosmic Destruction. She assumes that form in order to horrify the Asuras, in order to punish them in the way which is appropriate and befits the situation. She cannot use Her magnificently gentle elegant form now. So this is the Force, not the woman. That is how the human being makes a mistake, all the time thinking that because SHE assumes the "unsurpassingly beautiful", appealing form, it is just...just a little Goddess. No. It is not. It is not a "creature." It is the endless Cosmic Powerinfinite in Its Magnificence. So now She is in that form striking the enemies. [Recitation] In the Bible this great Battle is called Armageddon. It is known in every ancient Scripture. But I do not think anywhere, in any world is there the description of such daring, vivacity, concreteness and poetry as in the Devi Mahatmayam. [Recitation]

Please understand that these Cosmic battles in the Invisible Realm, in the Astral Spheres and higher, are reflected on earth. It does not mean that it has to be simultaneously with the time when it took place in the Invisible. The Invisible Calendar differs completely from the wee bit of earthly divisions. But the projected vibration of struggle of the Divine with the undivine is always affecting the minds. Therefore, everyone is partaking of the battle, the Cosmic Battle, either on the side of the Devas, or the Forces of Rightness, or on the side of the Asuras or the forces of wrong. Most people are mixed; they are neither good nor bad. They are sometimes good and sometimes bad, sometimes very good and sometimes very bad. Well, this does not help evolution. One has to choose resolutely. In most cases it is inevitable to fluctuate because a person is not on the Path. But if he is fortunate enough to be sent to the Guru, then there is no excuse, for he is sent by the Cosmic Force of Goodness, for he deserved it. He enters the Path and here from starts his evolution; here he gives a resolve. All the forces of darkness should become insignificantly weak in his estimation in comparison to his great resolve and aspiration. Not that the undivine does not assail, not that he himself is not threequarters of asuric nature, but he has to be completely set on the idea of conquering it. And tomorrow is Vijaya Dasami and not one Asura will be here! All of them are perished! Tomorrow is Vijaya Dasami...they all will be perished.... [Silence)... Those of you who are tired, please go now and give good thanks to the Devi who is fighting the evil. And those who want to stay with me for meditation, please stay. And if those of you are all of you, still the better! [No one leaves. Silence, Meditation.]

Vijaya Dasami

October 15, 1975

It is Vijaya Dasami. The tenth day of Victory. May you feel victorious over your inadequacies of any kindphysical, mental, spiritual. Just know that the Divine is a milliard times more powerful than the undivine. And in the Name of this Divine, listen again and again to the Devi Mahatmayam. I cannot listen enough to it. Come. [Recitation of the Devi Mahatmayam follows] [After the recitation, Valentina musingly] Om Sakti. It's a special place. It's a special time. It's a special Love here. And that's all I am going to tell you tonight.....

[Following morning)

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Student: It was such an immense experience, such a boon and privilege to watch You and to feel the flow of Your masterful recitation of the Devi Mahatmayam. Thank You very much.

Valentina: The pleasure is mine. [Smiling) Really my joy when there is appreciation of that which should be appreciated. By the way, appreciation as well as gratitude are the two royal qualities.

Another student: I have some doubts.

Valentina: I hope I will be able to solve them for you! Go ahead and tell me. Student; I read the Bible and try to understand. I was rather perplexed and wondered how come we here in the Ashram were disobeying God's most important commandmentbowingworshipping His force yes but in the form of gods and goddesses expressly as He said not to? He also expressly said, no work on the seventh day and we work on that day. Over and over throughout the Book this injunction is repeated: no other God is to be worshipped except

the Lord, and time and again the people revert back to idolatry. [Pause] It is so difficult to reconcile what is here and what is said in the Bible...and....

Valentina: [Gravely] Are you finished?!

Student: Well, as I thought and pondered and doubted and worried, mainly how to reconcile the Bible with Yoga, Your Yoga, I began to understand a little clearer. I saw that what You are teaching here is in no way related to this idolatry of the superstitious ones of that timeYou are helping us to indeed expand our understanding of God.... [Pause]

Valentina: Are you finished now?!

Student, Yes, I guess. Valentina: Thank you. your opinions are indeed generous! Before I

will Vijaya Dasami and
which is still in the air,Vijaya Dasami, the day of victory answer them. I want to remind you not to forget what you received in the over sin, stupidity and general ignorance.

It is good that you finally were able to "reconcile" but what a pity it required such humiliating and gross thoughts. Don't you think you ought to broaden your consciousness, or else you will always be confused! It is indeed somewhat embarrassing, as well as sad, that after so many years of attendance, you still den by the Bible is also forbidden here?! Idolatry is to take an image or a conare of such limited consciousness! Don't you clearly see that idolatry forbidCept and to divorce it from God, to put into it the human selfish and gross limitations. To forget the Supreme and to worship"graven images" is idolatry! A devotee, a mystic, a poet makes the image of God spiritual, in factmakes even the material things spiritual! Whereas the curious materialistic man is ever busy making the most spiritual concepts material. If you want to know what is idolatry, it is making the gross out of the subtle; this is the veritable idolatry. Not to accept the Lord in His Divine Glory, in His Greatness, in His outer manifestations is bigotry, fanaticism, crass foolishness, and...I'll go farther, precisely is a form of idolatry, a fool makes an idol out of his fanatic, unjust reprobations! Would it be an idolatry to enthusiastically Shout "Bravo" to the great soloists of the great orchestra?! Do you forget the conductor, let us say, Toscanini, when you applaud to, let us say, Horowitz, who plays piano solo in Toscanini's orchestra?! The three a's, approbation, adoration, appreciation is not the idolatry! But confusion, alas, goes on and on...Poor bipeds! When will man develop into a true human being who is able to think, to

discriminate, to feel and to have an insight, simultaneously?! Only such human being will be able to approach the Divine rightly and to, eventually, fuse with the Divine. Second student: How should we think of God?

Valentina: God the Absolute should be recognized as the root, as the source of gods, godlings, all creation, humans, subhumans and superhumans, everything. He should be worshipped in His own Name, for He is All in all. I am stressing this often enough with the hope that this should never skip or pass without notice the attention of the students. It is indeed a startling surprise that one can forget so easily the Teachings of the Bhagavad Gita or the integral Yoga of Sivananda on which my whole spiritual work is based! [Turning to the first student] Had you remembered my perpetual emphasis upon the One Power, you would never have the problem of "reconciling." Really lamentable! It is most obvious that you are unable not only to "reconcile" but also to feel God as One, or else hardly would you present me with your...testimony!

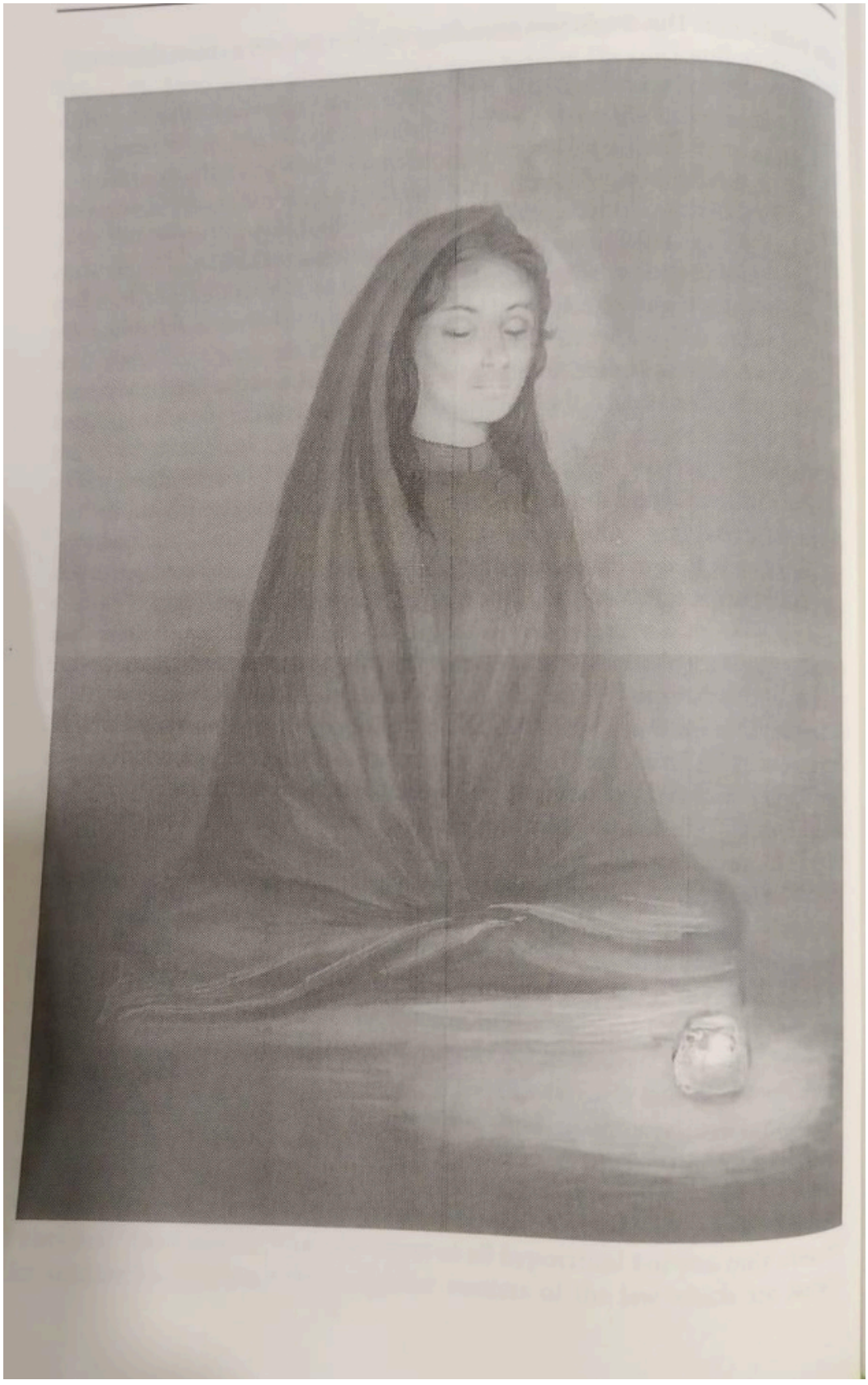
...Even to the limited and limiting worshipers who forget Him behind His forces, the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita gave a hope! He graciously said:... "For verily even if they worship the godlings, they, in reality, are worshipping only ME, for I am in everything...but they know not!" At another instance, didn't you hear me often stressing: the statements of Lord Krishna, that He is the Self seated in the hearts of all beings?! He is, verily, the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings. But very few people are able to behold God as the Self of all and as the One without the second. Therefore, in the same Gita the Lord goes into the description of all His attributes, and (that I have been stressing often enough) that the devotee can superimpose the Lord upon any of His great manifestations. It is more comforting for the ordinary, unspiritual, still unregenerated mind of man to think of the Lord in His various forms and manifestations. Certainly that does not mean at all that you are worshipping the idol, the "clay." Don't you understand it? You are worshipping the Divine Vibration of God through a symbol. Third student: How is it that Krishna speaks about Himself as God?

Valentina: What is so puzzling about it?! Aren't you big enough to accept Him as the Highest, as Brahman Himself? He is referring to Himself as not the personality but as Consciousness, as Brahman Himself, for He realized Brahman and was incarnated as the full manifestation of God. It is the annoying limitation of sectarian human mind which either doubts, like you do, or else attributes to its own sect the whole Glory of God, like in the case of dogmatic Christianity. Didn't Christ say the very replica of what Krishna tells us"Except through Me you cannot come to God." And what did the poor human mind make out of it?... We better stop here. for it will lead us into the debris of too wellknown

theology! Blessed are those who have the enlarged consciousness and who rejoice at every manifestation of the Divine. Yesterday was the Vijaya Dasami, the most auspicious day of the Glory of the Universal Mother; what greater spiritual glory can one imagine?! And in a week we shall worship God as Skandathe Lord pointed out clearly that He is Skanda amongst the victorious conquerors. Turn to our Krishna Jayanti observance, relisten to my words on the tape. Didn't I rejoice at the One Lord as also His own countless "becomings?" Don't lock God into the one stuffy chamber of your limitations!...

[Again turning to the first student) As to your remark, and now I am quoting you: "and we work that day"don't you think that this remark is not befitting the aspirant?! I have often heard it from both Christian and Jewish bigots! Remember the classical answer of Christ to the hypocritical Pharisees who accused Him precisely in violation of the Sabbath?! "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees!" He warned. "You, the worst of all hypocrites! For you only observe the surface law yet omit the weightier matters of the law which are Justice, law being undone." Mercy and Faith? This ought you have done and not to worry about the formaled approaches to the given laws, which are subject to change, which are not to The Lord gravely condemned and ridiculed all such mechanical, evilmind be understood literally or which are hiding the eternal Truth that has to be dis covered by the follower of Right Conduct! Don't forget that in the times of Moses "His Children" were veritable brutes! (Not that they are much superior now.) It took Christ to heighten some concepts. Neither should you forget that Christ never opposed (or altered the Holy Bible as such: only did He attack the criminal abuses, bigotry and the mechanization of the law! It is ridiculous to try to understand" with the surface, physical brain the holy scriptures. You never will. And you indeed totally misunderstand the work here if you are doubting its rightness "on the seventh day." What the Bible meant is to have rest once a week and to think about God on that day of leisure rather than be immersed in quarrels, selling, cheating or anything of that kind, which is always the main occupation of the brutal man! Instead, silly people think that all they have to do is to idly lounge around or have a "good time," but God for bid to perform some chore or even charity, or even the miracles which Jesus was performing on Sabbath. Oh, for shame! [Pause)

[Quietly] It is okay that you revealed your true nature, for it will serve as a warning to other wiseacres who might misread the scriptures! Do not read with too much sweat! Pray for more understanding, for the RIGHT Understanding. Above all don't assume so glibly; it really is most unhumble and unspiritual. Think how much disharmony, hatred, criticism and intolerance spring up only because man misunderstands, not only the religion of his neighbour, but his own religion as well!



Halloween

Student: Guru is it all right for children to partake of the Halloween frolics?

Valentina: Hardly it can be all right! Grownups are projecting the wrong suggestions for children and children, although innocently the wrong thing, are partaking of wrong about that?

Student: My little daughter is going to be dressed as a raggedy doll. What's

Valentina: It is very charming to put on a raggedy doll outfit and to fiddle. but surely not in the name of skeletons and devils?! Even if not deliberately done, still it is on the superstitious, silly or horrible background. The night is filled with stupor and invites the ghastly vibrations, Originally the custom pertained to some occult knowledge, but then it degenerated into immature foolishness, superstition, and at times even black magic. Second student, Isn't there much art which reflects the Devil?

Valentina: I wouldn't call it "reflection of the Devil," but rather the registration of the diabolic force. Certainly there is this element in art, indeed not as the cult of the Devil! One cannot dedicate art only to angels. There are the opposite forces. It would be a poor description if one eliminates the cosmic nuances. Real art impartially depicts everything in all the worlds be it human, subhuman, diabolical, angelical. Arts, if they are true, are not based on preconceived ideas, tendencies, prejudices, preferences, etc., yet they are backed by Truth and Beauty. Unless based on Beauty and Truth, art is distorted and becomes a pseudoart, a grimace! Student: Could You give me an example of the real art which depicts evil?

Valentina: Well, I'll give you a rather unsophisticated example. Take, for instance, "The Dance of the evil Spirits" from Peer Gynt's Suite by Edvard Greig, the piece accessible even to the musically untrained ear. [Valentina hums the music)... You remember? Or the ballet music of Verdi's "Macbeth." If you want some other examples, think about the folklore. There is so much of it in German fairytale legends or, for that matter, in the well familiar to me Russian folklore. The old Baba Yagga, for instance [Valentina playfully makes an eerie sound] whooooooooooo! a very expressive homely witch who inspired the imagination of many musicians and poets.

Student: What workwhichdepicts the evil force would You consider the highest? Valentina: I cannot thinkofanything higher than Faust. When you think of Faust you realize art has nothingtodo with witchcraft. Goethe depicts masterfully and unprejudicedly the subhuman,the human, the asuric realms with neither invocation nor identifications! depicting,observing, reflecting, sometimes struggling against the Dark one. That is interesting,attimes majestic! It is just like the Cosmology. But...what is practiced here on theHalloween in the United States is idiocy! So you see, one has really to have an extremelysubtleintellect in order to make the line of demarcation and to understand where thisdemarcation is necessary and where it starts. For, I again repeat, as a symbology, ashighart,as honest research, as impartial observation, things are praiseworthy. As sillycuriosity, base suggestions, superstition, perversity, evilor witchcraftthings arenotonlyobjectionable but horrible. But it requires intelligence; culture, discriminationandtheliving ethics to tell the difference! Take, for instance, our Cosmological Observances,take my skulls around my neck during the worship of Kali. Or take the dead skullontheAltar of St. Francis! Well, the person who has neither art nor culture nor knowledgeoftherelative religions would immediately put it almost on the Halloween level! Hewouldnotknow the difference. You understand?...

NOVEMBER

Pre Dipawali

Dipawali is a most charming Festival, aside from the fact that it is very mystical. It is again God, in His aspect of the Divine Mother. Lakshmi, the Force of Prosperity, Protection, Benevolence, Hospitality, Charm, Beauty, Sweetness! And so the whole Ashram will be full of lights. We remember the Light of God through these symbolical little lights. Lights are a very wonderful reminder of the Infinite Luminosity of the whole Cosmos and the One who projects even the Cosmos, who is far above everything projected.

Thus, for this Festival of Light, the Sadhana, or spiritual discipline, is to practice all your Little virtues. To me every light is representing and symbolizing the virtue of human heart. Everybody is invited and I hope everybody will be very happy.

One of the most charming customs, as you remember, is to give presents of nice clothes or, if not nice in the sense of luxury, nice in the sense of sentiment, something which you mean well. And so, as much as I can, I want everyone, [Smiling) especially girls, to have nice things. And everyone will get some kind of a something to put on your body with my blessings. I receive so much that this is a wonderful opportunity to give it away.

...In worshiping the attributes of God, we are exposing ourselves to the Divine Sakti; we are directly influenced by Herthe Divine Mother; we reveal our own divinity! It is a thrilling experience not to crave to go to Heaven, but watch Heaven descending to us! O Lakshmi!

DIPAWALI

November 3, 1975

[Valentina enters the Sanctuary in a sparkling golden gown carrying the Calendar of the month of November which had just been painted by one of the students. She is radiant and all aglow. Sitting before us, She holds the calendar in front of Her, She enchants by playing with Her eyes, speaking to us with them)

...Pass it, and look at it. November....

[Turning to a student who is now holding the Calendar]

How do you like the pas de deux?.... Pumpkin and banana are dancing! [Laughter] That was my "quickie" suggestion to make you happy! Looking at two large candles burning in the center of the Sanctuary) And watch the candles. Lakshmi doesn't like blazes, just soft lovely lights. Altar boy! Have some kind of a helper. [Vividly, extremely divinely delightful] Ahhhh.... it's good! It's Lakshmi!.... If I will see one face...which has no Lakshmi glow, I'll report! to the Devas! Arlene, please, two dimples! Okay, now it's better.

All right.... "Love Lights"two L's. Okay, Josep. Tell me something else. [Pause] quickly because they will go off soon! All your prayers for a virtue should be while the lights burn bright.

Student: I'm just thrilled to be here.

Valentina: Can't be more laconical. Genug. [Laughter] Who else? Anna, what do you think? I'm going to send you home soon, for you are not all that strong, so quicky!

Student: I'm just sitting here admiring the litlle Lights that go in the direction of the Big Light, the Divine Mother. And without You, Sivananda-Valentina, none of this would be possible. And also it's very imaginative, spiritually imaginative and inspiring and I guess that's the idea of the lights.

Valentina: Well.... it is really an "idea" only for the human mind, but in higher reality it is not just an idea; it is the fact. The whole Cosmos is the Light and now we are symbolizing it. We ascend towards it and It descends graciously if we sufficiently propitiate the Mother. Now It comes here...you cannot fly too well. But It is very gracious; It comes down.

And... those of you who are unwell or tired, please leave now. I will go to my Lakshmi there [Pointing to. Her quarters); I have the Altar and I will pray for you. And then I will come back, and meanwhile, you love the lights and then put them off [Whispering), put them off. And I will come back. [Childlike] I'm sorry to put them off but you have to. And then I come back, then no more. We shall be very earnest and we shall meditate and I will tell you other things.

[Valentina: leaves. Meanwhile the students are reducing the blaze in the Sanctuary. Shortly She returns. The blaze is subdued. Music of Liszt is played. Valentina is silent and absorbed, and then,]

..Om Shantih.... There is so much unhappiness in this world [With pain in Her eyes]so much suffering, so much gloom, so many tragedies. [Pause/1 sometimes think that people are committing crimes and are acting very beastly, monstrously, because they are unhappy. I sometimes think that if everyone would try to bring a little light to everyone else, life would not be so tragic and so criminal and so dark. (Softly] I sometimes am very sorry for people. Then I pray to Mother Lakshmi, to that aspect of God. It is not a fairy tale, although it looks like it. Anna used the word "imaginative" and fortunately she added the word "spiritually". Yes, it is spiritually suggestive, for so it is for most people.... but that's not sufficient, for it really is infinitely more! There is the Divine, but man is separated from the Divine. [Silence

And on this night of lights, let us unite in a special prayer, Let us invoke the Lights of Mother. The Divine Mother, that Force, that Sakti of God Himself, is always radiating Glory aud Beauty, and the whole nature responds to Her, except manthe trees, the grass, the beast, the birdbut man does not believe that there is She and so She flies away. I told you that there is Love Consciousness which knocks into every heart, but the heart is closed and the Love Consciousness...flies away.

So on this night, please do not take it as an entertainment. Do you think I would go into so much exposure just to provide entertainment? I really would not. I do not care to engage people's attention and occupy them pleasurably! How can one play gods?! I share that which is precious; I mean everything I am doing. When I ask you to "pick up some light" and symbolize it as a virtue, I feel that everybody plays with Valentina, but you play not quite in tune with me; you do not respond as quickly as I do! I mean it...I mean it. Whereas everyone is a little shy to be so childlike"pick up a virtue""Okay, I'll do it because Valentina asked me." But do you mean it really?...do you mean it?! Try to mean it. Pick up

a light and really, truly, with all sincerity think about it as a symbol of something Divine, for God is Light. The priest puts the candle on and people follow him at home and in synagogues and in churches. So it is a symbology which remained alive everywhere and yet man forgets about it; he puts his lights on mechanically, puts them off mechanically and forgets all about them. He should not forget!

the Light is a great mystery of God. And when we put it on, we put it on also in our hearts. And when we say, "Lord, there are so many lights now to propitiate that aspect of Thine which is Benevolence and Loveliness and Goodness and Charm and Refinement and Exquisiteness, we put that light to propitiate that Force. May It come down to us." For It is too far away from us because of ourselves, not because of the Force, but because of man who is so sophisticated and so dull and so "grownup," in the worst sense of the word, without child's innocence that he does not accept Her! He thinks, "Well, I just am too dignified even to think about God in such Form." Or "I am too shy to accept such great...such great Cosmic Play. How do I know?" Well, if you will not meditate upon It and if you will not pray and if you will not really propitiate It, you sure won't know! In this respect the East has more spontaneity.

Again and again I think of Sri Ramakrishna. For him Lakshmi was dancing all over his place! He heard Her bracelets! They were dingling, dingling Valentina dangles the bracelets on Her arm/ Like so! And it was a reality, it was a reality...it was a reality...it IS a REALITY!

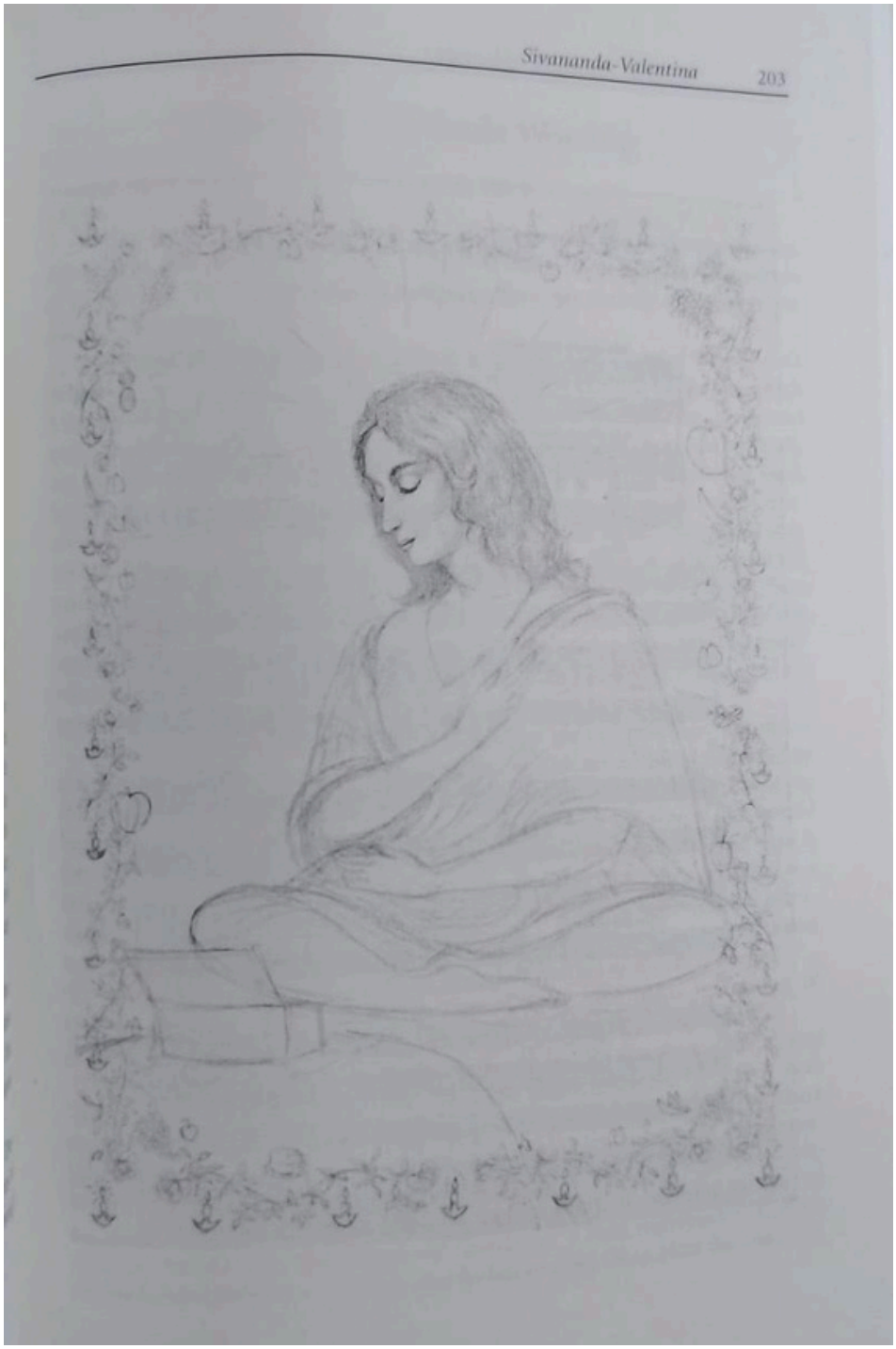
So let us pray to that Higher Reality to make your life a reality of that kind, of the Cosmic scale not just a little wee bit of earth clay!

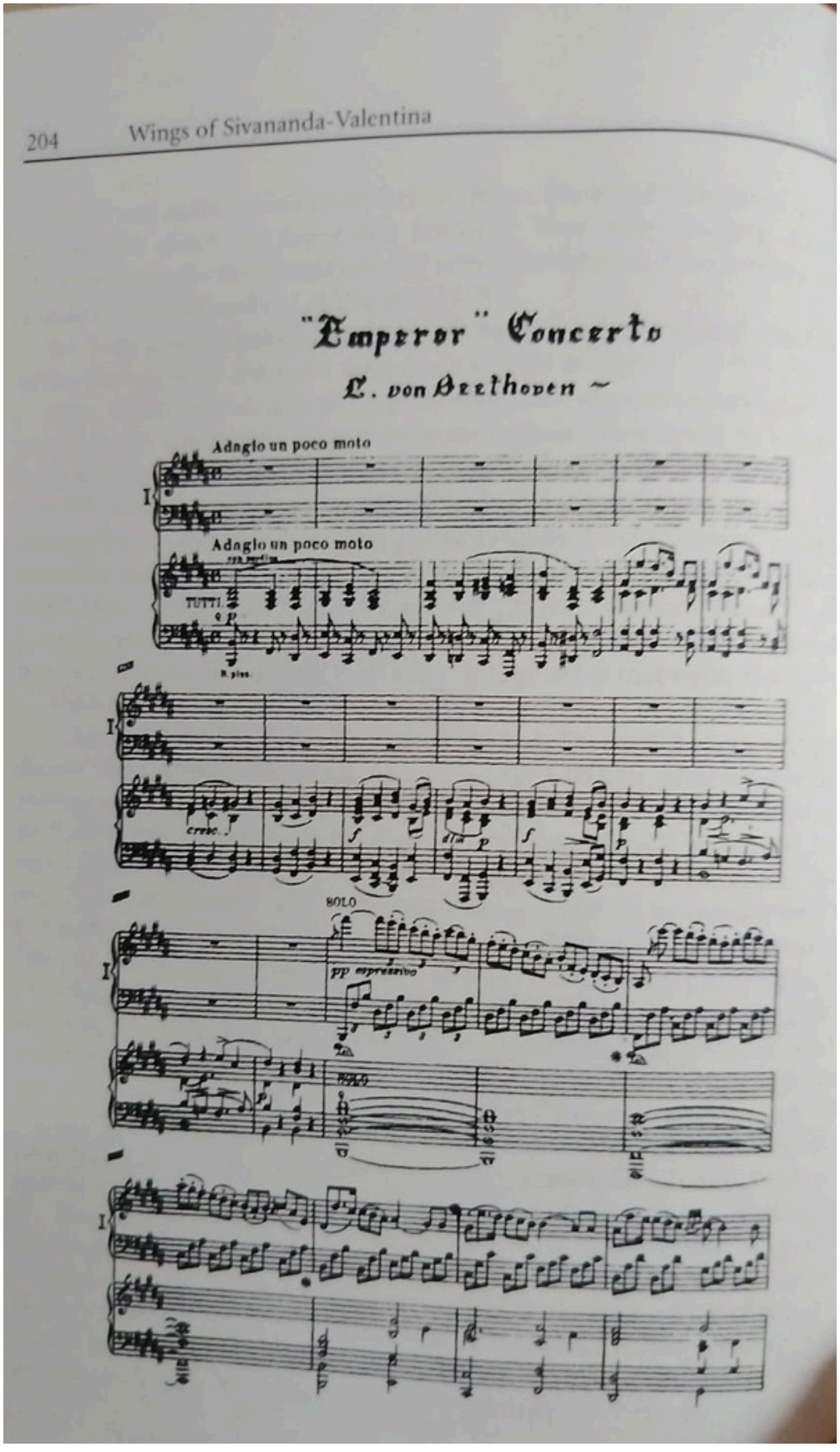
Now, differently, silently, pick up the virtue, for you can come to that Truth only through virtues; you cannot come through sin. That is just the point. You have to pick up that particular virtue...and candidly speaking, I dislike the word "virtue" because it is hackneyed and moralized by dull people. I love Beauty! Beauty is virtuous or else it is not Beauty. I use the word "beautiful" when I mean virtuous. [Vividly] Hey, suppose we will together meditate on that?! I think you will do it better if you will join me. I just said "Beauty" now I add Purity. Usually Beauty suggests sensuality and man immediately becomes impure. Jack knows it by heart. [Laughter] Is that right, Jack? Student: [Gravely] Yes, Ma'am.

Valentina: [Humourously] Nu?! But when I say "Beauty," I parallelly, immediately make it pure, because it is an offense to Lakshmi, great offense, to be impure and to pester Her through "unbeautiful beauty!" You cannot propitiate Her if you are not pure, by no way! You probably will attract the lower astral forces which will fool you, which intoxicate you all the asuras, mind you! And you, in your folly, will think that you will be in contact with the Devas. No, you woon't! You've got to be pure! What is purity? [Intensely] "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is purity! Now that I brought Christ to Lakshmi, you might feel better how I approach the Beauty. Without purity there is no Lakshmi. Think about it. Think about it...Purity and Beauty. Beauty is Liszt whom you now listened to; Purity is this Sanctuary. Let us relisten the "Benediction dans la Solitude." [Music]

And now...let us hear from Devi Mahatmayam, Salute to Narayani, who is Lakshmi. You cannot propitiate Her better than through this recitation. [Valentina speaks simultaneously with the taped recitation) "Salutations to You, O Devi Lakshmi, O Narayani" Come on. [Recitation is played! [Musingly)...Kaumari is the Sakti of Skanda....

Salutations be to You, O Narayani.... That is the best prayer to the Devi. [Softly, musically] Salutations be to You, O Narayani.... (Valentina lights the candLe al Her Altar, rings each bell on Her Altar individually, then charmingly, unpredictably picks them all up, ringing them strongly in unison]




"Emperor" Concerto
L. von Beethoven
Adagio un poco moto
Adagio un poco moto
TUTTI
cresc.
dim.
SOLO
pp espressivo
SOLO

First Day of Skanda Worship

November 4, 1975

[In the Garden under the evening sky, Valentina leads the students in asanas pranayama, and Nada Yoga. As the student in charge of music plays the Adagio of Beethoven's "Emperor Concerto," Valentina becornes entirely absorbed in the sound...then spontaneously]

How wonderful that you gave me this music! The glory of Beethoven's majestic Concerto really illustrates the Devas and the exploits of Skanda which I have iust been contemplating. This Adagio is entirely depicting, really and truly, the life of the Devas, the life of the Angelic forces, which are doing nothing but sacrificing to the Supreme, performing their sacrifices, adoring God, being unto God, being verily His forces, His offshoots. So serene, very depictive of the Daivic life! [Turning to the "conductor"] Say again a couple of sentences. [Parts of the Adagio are played] All right. Stop it. The musically untrained ear may say, "What a monotonous life the Devas have." No! There are very many nuances in the life of the Devas as well as in the placidityof this music, very, very many. And what is more, it is ever ready to burst into the radiant joy, into the innocent frolics, into the unending, exquisite nuances of the sports of the Devas. Great!

Usually I select the Adagio as the background for our practices. But please now continue with the Rondohear the alarm! This serene life is disturbed by the intrusion of the asuric force. (The Rondo Is played. Valentina hums the beginning of the Rondo., most vividly accompanied with the play of Her hands) Bap, bapbaba, bapbabam! And there is an alarm among the Devas! This is totally Sattwic music "in spite of" its enormous elan. For often the 'elan is a danger zone, an invitation to the desire! It is not really depictive of the intrusion of the Asuras but rather the excitement of the Devas, their reaction upon the Asuras. Now...the gods march to Skanda! [Extract of Rondo is played)

Now, don't you hear, don't you seeeee?! They take turns in relating it! [Valentina hums, depicting the nuances of the music] Bam, brbrbrbrum!

Describing the horror of the occurrences there. [In the voice of the Devas "Impossible, O Lord! Impossible! We were performing our sacrifices here comes this one with the horns,

and here comes this one with the tail, and here comes this one and tells us the alarming things which we cannot even translate into the language of the gods! O Lord, they are chasing us! O Lord, we cannot perform our sacrifices! O Lord, we cannot think of anything except our defense!" Excitement! [Turning to the "conductor"] Next movement! [Extracts are played in which there is a short, very lyrical section) Okay. Now the Lord very tenderly and quietly.... Skanda does not have to immediately use His Vel. He speaks.... [To the "conductor"/ Can you catch this bit? [The music is played a Valentina speaks Explaining to them very patiently. The music rises again as Valentina interjects vividly at intervals Organizing them!... [Vividly gestures simultaneously with the music) Vell...Gallop!... But note how harmonious and rhythmic is the gallop! No spasms, just a victorious wave of tightness!.... Fitne Genug. [The music is stopped)

So that is what is going on in Heaven and on earth with Skanda and with the asuras. That is what is going on in human hearts all the time! Last night was Dipawali and the Devi Herself tippytoed in the Sanctuary. Man cannot earn it; it is all the Grace. She graciously gave Her Darshan to those who felt and for those who did not feel! She was there! that's all!

Does it mean that the heart, that the inner being is purified in toto? Of course not! It means only that the soul partook of some peace and some beau ty and some glory, yet in most cases, underneath are those with the horns and with the tails and with the bad smell.....

The main difference between the Asuras and the Devas is that the Devas do not accept anything but God Whereas Asuras accept everything but God!

Asuras in man and in Cosmos personify a very selfish and very assertive and very unclean force. They might be talented but are never clean, that is for sure always. And even if some of them are very handsome, with the big muscles, tremendous shield and very shiny, brilliant auras, they are nastyhandsome. they are tempting and asserting and corrupting. They are tremendously selfassertive. They have neither humility nor purity nor loveliness.

The asuric man wants everything for himself and does not wantmark well to correct himself. He does not want! Whereas the angelic man wants to correct himself. The asuric man, when he takes sometimes the labour of quoting the Devas (and he very often does it and tries to pass for the Deva), he quotes very elaborately and eloquently but he never

practices what he preachesnever. By that you can tell the asuric force. They never will sacrifice one bit of their bad habits; they want all the bad habits to be alive. They can talk, they can quote, they can admire everything which is admirable but they will not do anything to become unto it, Never! Never! They do not want to...they do not want to...

They claim that they have love, and they do, but it is a distorted love. Their love is passion; it is for their kinsmen only and for themselves. Whereas Devas love is for Skanda. Skanda is God personified. Devas are the Rays of Goodness. The Devas, when they are disturbed and cannot do anything, they run to God! And say, "Lord, organize us!" Whereas, the Asuras run away from God and turn against Him.

And... Skanda says, "Here, here, here. And away we go! Vel! Devas, you will not lose anything but you have to fight. You have to follow Me. You have to do peerything which I tell you!" "O Lord!" (Valentina bows) And away they go! Well, [Widely opening Her eyes, quietly) that is all, I guess! On the background of this truly divine music, please make up your mind "and away you go!" to again and again, through all your life here and hereafter, to strive to be perfect. The most difficult thing is the complete self giving! Really, the acid test. How many are ready to abandon their doubts, for instance?! Or their despondency?! Or their ambitions? Well, the Devas were ready, and that is why the Lord could lead them to victory. If you can give yourself then you will not be the Asura. You have to sacrifice; you have to go with Skanda who is Perfect. eternally Youthful, adorably available to everybody who adores Him, and everready to help.

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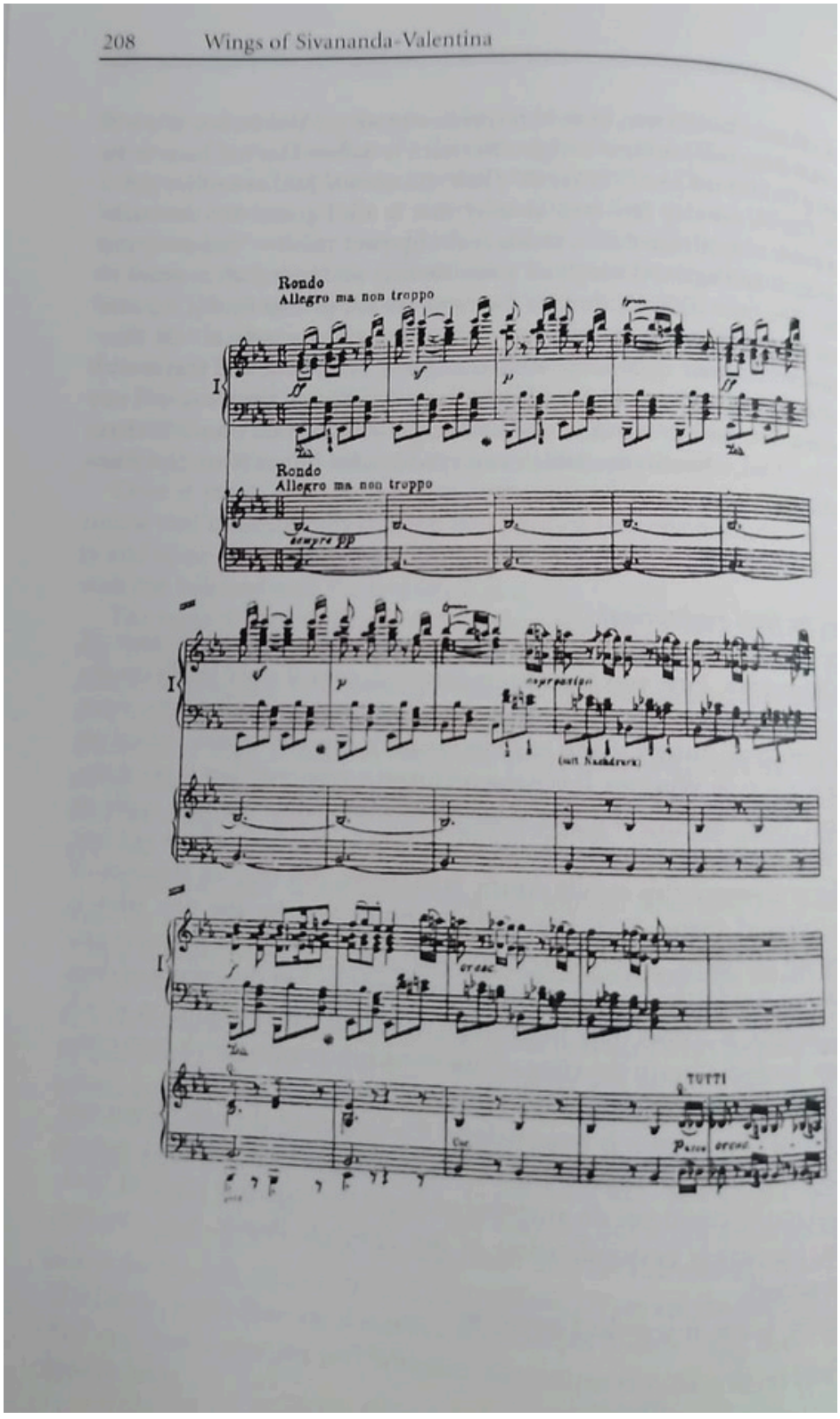
[Before the final meditation]

Before we shall leave the Garden, I shall again stress the significance of Skanda Observance. First you have to understand, even if only intellectually and not intuitively, not spiritually, that the whole human civilization, since times prehistorical, historical and current is rather Asuric or darkbased on ignorance and not on Wisdom. It is not a pessimistic statement but it is a statement of fact. Now the why of it (for if we do mention a fact we have really to pinpoint it, to understand it) the why of it is that even the best man is not free from selfassertiveness, this totally Asuric trait. Now, you take an instance of extremely talented mansuch one usually thinks that he the one who is responsible for his talent. Whereas, it is not he; it is the Force! The moment one knows that it is not he, he

becomes humble, or angelic; but this moment does not come cheaply. It comes only in raising yourself above the rung on which you are now. It cannot be on the rung of this consciousness in which man ordinarily finds himself. There should be transformation.

Now, Skanda Observance is most helpful for loosening the ego! When you contemplate that even if angelic forces, endowed with tremendous power, prowess and purity could not do anything without the Superior Force of God, for Skanda, I repeat is personification of the Absolute Power, how can you remain the same?!

Student: Yes, Guru, it is indeed awesome.



Valentina: Not that it is awesome. Sure it is awesome. But what do youMary, John, Stuart, Jay, whoever, all of youwhat do you feel as far as your endeavours, as well as your dependence upon the Supreme is concerned. Silence No answer, of course! Seriously and calmly) What I pray for is that

you might prolong that feeling of awesomeness, that you might clearly realize that even the Devas, or the beings of enormous perfection, could not do any thing without the Grace of God. Pause Stop and think, and understand. eventually, and realize, consequently, that all the misery is coming from that sick and sickening feeling of attributing things to yourself, not as the central being, the God within yourself and outside you. The resplendent Skandal Don't be so proud of every achievement; don't try to conquer the others by your superiority; don't envy others if they are superior to you, but know that it is the Force of God which makes you able to do things, nay, which does and acts through you! The moment you know that reallybut really, not just intellectually sweating about it you become released, you are liberated, you are free. You do not have any more that sickening, hurt feeling if you are not recognized or that sickening craving to be recognized. You do not have any feeling of competition. You may argue in your limited human mind, "Well, then how can we live? We won't have any drive." You will have a drive, but it will be the Divine driving you. So that's it. God bless you.

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Second Day of Skanda Worship

November 5, 1975

Valentina: In connection with Skanda worship, there always is the worship of what is known in Sanscrit as Vel or His Holy Spear. Vel, or Spear, that mystical weapon of the Lord, stands for the highest consciousness. Vel also is called Jnana Vel or the Spear of Knowledge. This Spear is not only the symbological weapon of destruction of the enemies of God, but it is said to literally kill all the enemies of God if one is concentrating upon it. Student: What does Guru mean, the Vel can "literally kill?"

Valentina: Well, this particular Symbol, the Vel, is very mysterious. I will tell you one interesting anecdote pertaining to it. There are some, especially in the south of India, very, very devoted worshipers of the Lord Skanda. One such was a plain man and he was concentrating on the Vel in his own particular manner. He knew that the Vel, or the Spear of the Lord, deals with miraculous powers of instantaneous destruction of sin, of any kind of danger, of anything which is against harmony and peace.

Once he was attacked in the forest by the murderer, but he was not afraid He had in his pocket an ordinary little betel leaf with a sharp end. He visual. ized it as the Vel and he pronounced the Mantra of Lord Skanda and concentrated upon the Vel. He threw that little leaf into the face of the man who attacked him, and it is said that the man immediately fell dead.

Such is the faith, such is also the power of the Mantra and the power of the Symbol. But it goes without saying that in order to achieve such a Siddhi, and the man did not even know that it was a Siddhi, or psychic power, he simply had faith in order to have such faith, it is a fulltime job.

Student: What is the best way to remember the Vel?

Valentina: [Smilingly repeats the student's question]... The "best way" to remember, in spite of all your distractions and thick impressions of the world?!

Well, usually fulltime devotees of the Lord are fasting six days. Because it is very difficult to fast six days and perform duties and be with peoplejust cut off the menu, have one meal a day. Now why is it done? It can become another superstition or another tradition or another stupidity. It is done only for the purpose of making you remember the Vel. Every time you think, "Oh, that was my time to eat," you think, "That is my time to remember the Vel. In other words, it is a suggestive method to remember. Man cannot remember very well, so restraint is for the purpose to help remembering!

Student: Guru, how can I use the Symbol of the Vel to help me against the "thick impressions?"

Valentina: When you think about Vel, this miraculous, mystical Weapon, you think about it as your higher Self, also as your Spirit, as your Soulthe Soul who is completely in charge of the body and the environment. This leads to realization of God in you and outside you. Then only you are able to perform your duties and be in everyday occurrences without thinking too much about them, yet you perform them very well. You can be a virtuoso of sport, of some art, of some job, of some relationship with somebody you can do it marvelously but you do not think it is real"real Real!" It is just a byproduct, but the real

Real is the Vel or whatever is your symbol of God. That is the way to reinforce your memory.

Student: Guru, thank You for the guidance, for I know how often life becomes complicated and causes the loss of remembrance.

Valentina: 'Complicated? You are flattering yourself! Not only complicated but useless. We all are extremely limited and extremely handicapped because of either perpetual paying the debt to somebody or something or grabbing the "dues" something pleasurable which takes us away from God.

Student: I understand how the paying of debts could be a handicap, but how could one be limited by what one receives?

Valentina: Man can be just as well trapped into the, for instance, big, money which comes to him or some kind of an endeavour, or some kind of a fame and namethe Karmic due. It is not only the Karmic debt but also the Karmic due which can turn him away from God because he becomes so involved and so smart and so proud, and all that.

Student: Guru, what is at the source of our Karmic debts?

Valentina: Indebtedness is all due to human desire that prompts human selfish action. Every selfish action produces Karma, produces some kind of effect, some kind of circumstance which you are involved into.

Student: And this is usually painful?

Valentina: Sometimes it is such an acute suffering that you completely are identified with it and definitely you are handicapped beyond words, for you completely forget God then.

Another student: Guru, but I thought suffering was supposed to turn one towards God.

Valentina: You cannot really suffer acutely and that moment perform your Sadhana. Although it is said that suffering turns you to God, there is suffering and suffering. Sometimes man is smashed to such an extent that he just simply continues to do everything wrongly. Well, this is Karma. But when you live more or less normal life, it is given to you to think about every possible way in order to neutralize your Karma, both good and bad, and to become free....

All spiritual observances are for the sole purpose of making you free. Is it not fascinating to think of God all the time in whatever possible way? It is very difficult without coming up to Him. You come up. He comes down. You don't come up...[Smiling) He comes down anyhow, but you don't see Him..... Second student: Could You please take us back to Vel?! It seems this is the way to make our good Karma!

Valentina: Meditation on Vel is more than making "good Karma!" It is to swim across the enchanted lake of Karma and to find yourself on the other shore, the shore of Freedom! I love the mystical Sadhana of meditation upon the Vel, upon the Spear of the Lord as my highest consciousness and to know that it is killing the ignorance! If you are thinking about it very, very concentrat edly, you raise your whole consciousness. You have to love that on what you concentrate and you have to understand it. Otherwise it is of no avail..... Visualize the Spear, that which is called the Vel of Lord Skanda. Know that it is the extremely sacred Symbol and a very powerful one. Associate with it the most noble qualities. Its height should be the height of your thinking, the really noble and lofty thinking. Its width should be the broadening of your consciousness. Its length should be your range. Its sharpness should be the keenness and the sh tlety of your intellect. Now, when you think about it and visualize it, it really purifies you immensely even if you are unable to visualize it longer than for short while. When you associate your life, your endeavour, your ideals with stach high symbology, you somehow become ashamed of gruesome things, of base things, of unworthy things. You somehow lose interest to them. True, man is complex being and there is, as it were, life within life in this complex being. You live consciously in one part of your being; you live subconsciously in the other and you have an enormous amount of bad habits in that subconscious mind which also assert themselves and live their own lives. There is such thing as the vital part of you, the physical part of you and the mental part of you, all differently developed or underdeveloped in most casesSo in spite of lofty inspirations, at times, in spite of some glimpses, in spite of hearing the word of Truth. the stubborn force of darkness asserts itself. It does not want to die because it was born. Everything which is born wants to live. Now, when you have that very, very powerful Mantra, the Vel Mantra, when you say Vel or you say Skanda or you say

Subrahmania all these Names pertain to the Conqueror, to the Fierce One. [Intensely) to the Lofty One, to the Pure One, to the Adorable One when you say that and mean it, you would be amazed how all those dark devils within you. all those asuras whom He fought, how they cringe and how they take to their heels. They really do. It requires twothe Vel and you. The Vel, that piercing Spear, remains powerful, but not in the weak hands. Make your hands strong and then raise the Vel! Those who are ready and who love can take this as their Symbol from now on. We have still four days of this worship, but if you are intense enough, you can make four years out of these four days. And during the whole of November we shall definitely relive it, for time is so extremely short and I want to lengthen it for you. That's about it. [Silence and meditation)

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Third Night of Skanda Worship!

November 6, 1975

It is very interesting that again and again human mind reveals its limitations, incapacities, inability to remember. I know that last night everyone was very moved. This morning, however, everyone was only trying to remain "being moved," trying to remember, trying to recollect. Few could maintain that atmosphere of last night's, really, the Presence of Murugan Himself, for He is graciously revealing Himself when He is remembered. But most people cannot retain the intensity. Why is it? Because the habitual denseness takes over very, very quickly.

In that connection, I thought of Arunagiri, a striking personality, what an adoring heart! For him, Skanda was not only Ishta Devata but God the Absolute...Arunagiri said, in one of his poems (In an ardent voice) O Lord, I want my mind to dwell upon Thee all the time. I want to all the time sing Thy Name. I want to say Murugan, Kumara, Skanda, all the time! But this mind is hard as a stone! It does not remember thee! O Lord, make this mind obey Thee!!"

So the Saint admits and confesses that this mind is a vicious mind. Sweet as Nectar is the Name, yet the mind does not want it, does not want the sweet things, wants just the

some kind of poisonous lollipop, does not want the real royal jelly honey, cannot, is impotent! One has to melt his stonelike heart, says Arunagirimelt that heart into the Divine Name. Then one can remember it and then comes the Grace.

Student: How can we melt the stonelike heart?

Valentina: Live your feelings, experience them, do not just think about them in a rhapsodic way. Feel your feelings; don't think about them! The heart will melt! But it is an uphill journey, for the mind is horribly forgetful!

"All the Devas in Heaven and all the men on earth praise Thee, O Lord, all of them," sings Arunagiri "Yet who has discrimination?! Bestow the discrimination upon that horribly forgetful mind, O Lord." So apparently it is very difficult to remember the Adorable God in His various Forms unless the mind is very, very well purified and very well under the control. [Pause]

...It is said that Lord Murugan, or Skanda, even in His childhood, in His very early youth, was full of enormous wisdom prowess and miraculous, of course, powers. [In innocent, spontaneous, childlike manner] He used to do plenty of "Bala Lila," boyish exploits. He would put the mountains underneath the water: "Why so many mountains?" (Laughter) (Vividly gesturing with Her hands the submerging of the mountains | Bum, bum, bum, bumgo the mountains!

The Devas from the distance were watching Him, asking, "Who is behind all these disturbances? Let us shoot arrows. It is some kind of danger. Maybe it is an Asura!" So they were shooting the arrows at the little "cosmically pranky" Skanda. Well, the arrows of the Devas became the garlands of roses the moment they reached Him! He was catching them and playing with them and laughing [Valentina's arms moving gracefully, as if playing with the garlands, throwing them in the air] was He beautiful, was He adorable! No words can describe! Just such a spark of Joy and Loveliness! Next moment He would be aware that He is the Divine Incarnation of Siva Himself. So He shouted at the Devas, "You Devas! What are you doing? Do you know with whom you are dealing?"

And the Devas said, "With a little boy who is too daring!"

"Oh yeah?!" [Laughter) "Come on here!"

And then they recognized in Him the Adorable Lord. And He said to them, "But some of you still do not understand who it is." And then He shot His arrows which... [The wind knocks over a vase on Valentina's asana table) like that! Everything boom bum!...which reached the Devas and felled them down. Then Narada, the Divine Guru of the Devas, came with petitions and prostrations to the Lord and said, "Please make them all alive!"

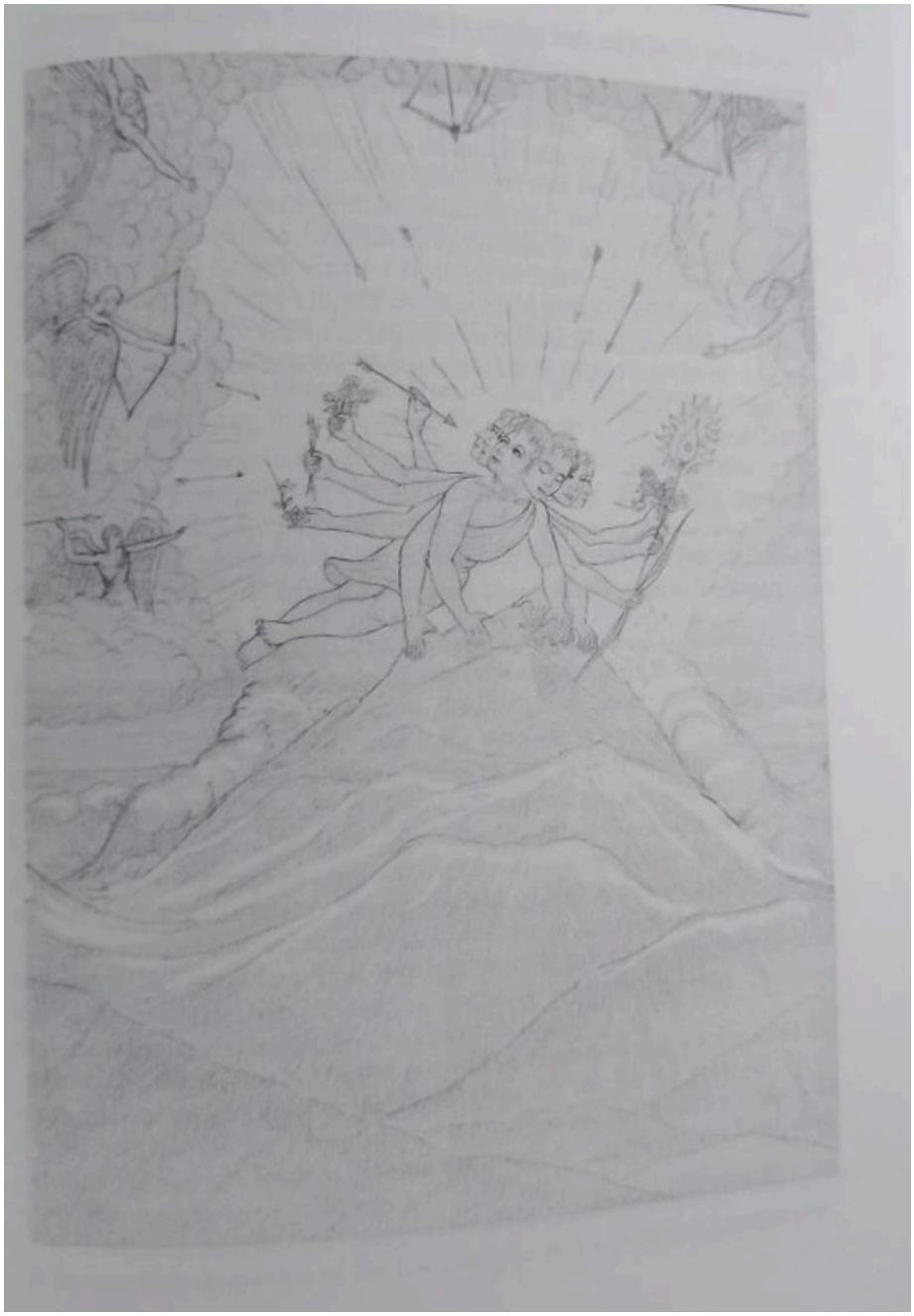
So the Lord said, "Okay, if they will repent!"

"They will repent when they are alive!" [Laughter]

"Great! I'll make them alive! It was my Bala Lila. I really did not mean it."

And they were all very happy about being alive again, repented, prostrated; everything was spic and span, till came that monster Surapadma. Now, the Lord of such great exploits just like so [Clicking Her fingers] could pulverize Surapadma, although he was a mighty Asura. But He gave him six days and six nights! And His Vel finally killed that terrible Asura with all his retinue. And so the Lord was the veritable protector of the Devaloka and saved that wonderful region of Heaven from the Asuric invasion.

These horrible asuras, I often tell you, can be compared with the dreadful invasions within the human being. Again in the ardent words of Skanda's best devotee, Arunagiri, "Even this terrible Asura is not as horrible and as strong and as poisonous as human desires. O Lord, once Thou could kill the monstrous Asuras, Thou can certainly kill all my desires and all my nasty thoughts and all my terrible forgetfulness of the Adorable You." [Pause]



And that should be our prayer tonight that we shall at least carry theremembrance of that incredibly beautiful Power of God. Lord Skanda, Murugan, the Sixheaded Divine Miracle that you may go to bed with this feeling. You may argue, "I am tooprosaic, too heavy: I have a body on, and the body is very full of its own desires and its ownimpulses. How can I remember such Glory?" Exactly, how can you? Only by the Grace.Ifyou will repeat the Name of the Lord, not just mechanically, (nothing happens frommechanical things, nothing good; a lot of bad things do happen), but if you would succeeda little bit, through His Grace, to repeat His Name with all your ardour and lose your horrible skepticism and cynicism, I assure you, your asuras will be down! They will be disinfected and thrown out

as cockroaches. And I wish you good luck on the third night of the worship of Lord Skanda, under the sky and stars and stormy winds....

God bless you.

(The music of Beethoven, the Adagio of the "Emperor Concerto," is played, [10] The Adagio goes into the Rondo. Valentina sits up] He's Preparing His Peacock! Come on! [Valentina gesturing, the Peacock is prepared. And as the music continues to rise, steps off Her Asana platform as though mounting the Peacock and triumphantly flowing with the music, leaves the Garden]

[10] *See page 317*

Fourth Night of Skanda Worship

November 7, 1975

It is interesting that during these days some of the students revealed the Asuras within themselves more than ordinarily, as if all the ignorance and the darkness and the sickly accumulations of the subconsciousness particularly came to the surface. Also, it is rather revealing that the personality, the ego, even prefers to continue the coexistence with the Asuras, the inner enemies, the inner sores. It is a pathological almost rejoicing at one's own suffering and inadequacy. One sees it for wrong but does not want to make an effort to get rid of it. It is particularly pathological during the Observance when you are asked to forget everything but God. I hope you all realize that it is not a theory here.

Student: We all owe You an apology, for compared to Your ardour, sincerity and actual practices, we sure are lukewarm and are theorizing more than practicing. But it is a great inspiration to watch You and to try to follow You.

Valentina: Thank you, that was a good testimony

Second student: Isn't the human nature a peculiarly strange nature in that it wants to have its cake and eat it too?

Valentina: Indeed! A rather difficult task, is it not? Well.. I shall go back to Arunagiri, that devotee par excellence of Lord Skanda, that devotee for whom there was nothing else but the Lord. And in one of his meditations he again addressed the mind, the dire enemy of the Spirit, the carnal mind. And he said, "Oh mind, make it thy business to become the companion of the Lord who pierced with His Vel even the monstrous, huge mountain Krauncha. Oh mind, through the knowledge of serenity become the companion of the Blessed Lord Skanda." Now, the mountain Krauncha actually was not real, it was a magic mountain: a spell was cast upon one of the dire enemies of the Lord, the mighty Asura, who was cursed by a Saint and was magically transformed into the mountain. It was also prophesied that Lord Skanda will destroy this mountain. That is parenthetically, just to explain the prayer of the Saint Arunagiri who eulogizes, parallely with this prayer, the great exploits, legendary, heroic deeds of Lord Skanda.

Now, you see, in this particular prayer the Saint does not ask for anything which human mind values so highly. He does not ask for the great success in life; he does not ask for a love affair; he does not ask for money or health or anything. All he prays for is to become a constant companion of the Lord. I just adore that expression “companion of the Lord." Well, who can be called the "companion of the Lord?" Sure enough Arunagiri! He became the companion of the Lord in spite of his incredibly horrible past!

The companions of the Lord are not those who now and again think of Him, who go to the Synagogues Friday and Saturday or to the Church on Sunday and then the whole week forget about Him. The companions of God are not those who are coming here and listening to me and are studying my Messages and talks or going and studying somewhere else, taking pilgrimage to Himalayas or to Jerusalemthese are not the companions of God. Maybe they are seekers and maybe not even that, maybe just curious People. So who are the companio God? The companions of God are those who have nothing else in their life except God! [Pause/ Goes without saying that these are very exceptional people and there are not many of them, but that is what Arunagiri was praying forto become the companion of the Lord "through the knowledge of serenity," he said. That is poetically signifying that one must be able to meditate upon the Supreme serenely, placidly and constantly.

Now, when we are dedicating any kind of an observance to the Lord, we have to crucify the ego. It is absolutely impossible to fume the incense to the ego on one side and think of the Supreme Power, which completely surpasses the ego and the outer world and all the worlds on the other; it is just impossible. During these intense six days you might be attacked more than at other times by your various habitual ambitions and uncomfortable feelings or thoughts or reactions. But one thing I have to tell you that your attitude during these six days should be different than during the other days. Well, you may argue, [Humourously] "Valentina You have always six days here. There is no break, no vacation, and we do have to think about nothing but the Supreme all the time, according to Your standards. C'est toujours la même chanson!" It sure is! I do not protest, it really is!

Student: Why is it Guru, that in spite of You and all that goes with You, we do relax our efforts and are cunning enough to "manage making intervals" just as one manages to have sex affairs or to take dope?

Valentina: Why7! Because it is the specialty of the human, carnal mind, the most dire enemy of the Spirit. In spite of the very holy and intense Sadhanas, the human mind has a trick of converting the intense atmosphere into the paltry routine and the routine into the pretense, into the makebelieve observance. So it is a trickery and it is something which a true man has to be aware of and declare war against.

But let me console you! You can straighten Yourself by paying attention, not so much ro that dire enemy mind, but to the higher aspect of your intelligence which makes you come here and spend hours with me and read the right thing and think the right thoughts. Perhaps lovely experiences will start happening to you! Perhaps not "in spite of Valentina," but maybe "because of Her"?! Won't you please think about the lofty part of your mind; that will help you to eradicate the other one the carnal mind, the stubborn mind, the selfassertive mind, the greedy mindgreedy for everything which Lord Skanda pierces with His Vel! Also don't forget the meditation of one of these nights on the Vel which signifies the highest consciousness. It is only the highest consciousness which can pierce the lowest one.

With all that, be at peace and calmly review in your mind what I have just told you.

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Fifth Day of Skanda Worship

November 8, 1975

Let us unite in the Name of the Lord Skanda! The fifth night of my worship of that Fierce One, Young One, Vital One, Perfect One, Adorable One, Subrahmania or Skanda! (Snort silence)

When one thinks about the Supreme Reality, the real Realnot just that which you see with your eyes and smell with your nose but that which hides from your nose and from your eyes and which requires a different vision altogetherwhen you think about it during such awesome days and nights, you simultaneously notice the almost humiliating helplessness of man in his daytoday usual life of the senses and mortal calculations, the ordinary mind. That is the knowledge through the senses. Such knowledge identifies the "1" with the body, really, nothing else but body, and perceives other people as other bodies. Well, this is the commontoall mentality. It can be a man of extreme education and great refinement and it can be a very plain man, but that is how the outer knowledge is characterized by identification with the body and the senses and the outer calculative mind.

You can measure your progress in the inner life by precisely how much you do not depend upon your sensual or sensuous responses and upon your limited and limiting evaluations through your ordinary carnal mind. If you can (to put it in very simple words) if you can perceive quickly, very quickly, without calculating, if you can feel the beat of another man without either rationalizations or artificial sentimentality, but just onetwothree, it means you are really progressing. If you see yourself visàvis the other man all the time, twentyfour hours a day, it means that you are not progressing; it means that you are depending precisely on that outer functioning of your brain and of your senses.

In that connection, I thought again of Arunagiri, of that enormous devotee of Lord Skanda. Ivalue this verse perhaps above others in that it deals precisely with what occupies me so much and so often that perception above mind and above senses. And he says, "When by the Grace of the Lord, of my Subrahmania, I get the awareness of the Vel, that Symbol of highest Consciousness within me, I think without thinking and I speak without speech

and I see without seeing. And I do not depend on the world, for intellect is transcended and ignorance ceases.... Neither I have to communicate with the world, for I don't need it!"

Well...what does it mean? It means that this is the going very deeply within and by the Grace of that tremendous Force receiving the straight and clear knowledge, the subtle but precise perception of things the way they are. Then a very, almost amusing experience occurs even if you have only a glimpse of such supra-sensuous, supra-mental perception! You discover that you no longer need to read the big words, the long, high talk, the intellectual debate. or even the very brilliant exposition...all of which you know without thinking! By that also you can go.

When the big words cease to attract you and tempt you, know for sure you caught the fish. That is what he was talking about. Pause When you are, by the Grace of the Lord, having that Consciousness, the Vel which pierces the darkness of precisely your outer nature which you hold so dear! then "you think without thinking!" Then you actually do not think about anything, but there is one thought which thinks all your thoughts, and that is the thought of the Supreme Power, of that Skanda whom we now worship on the fifth night of His tremendous exploits. [Silence]

...I know that you all receive now because it is His Sakti working through me. And I know that you will sleep and it will still work with you and in you. And I know that when you will get up you will forget it! [Charmingly So I know without thinking! [Laughter] God bless you. Om Sakti. [Pause]

Perhaps one more little reminder that tomorrow is the sixth day and night of the Adorable Lord Skanda. I wish it would be forever. It is wonderful to celebrate that sixth night, and tomorrow I invite you all to the Sanctuary and not to the Garden and we shall offer Him the lights which are still there from Dipawali and we shall love that Victory of Lord Skanda. And we shall visualize the huge. ferocious Surapadma Asura all smashed-down-down!

And do not forget that that Surapadma is working havoc within every human heart; that everything which is limiting you, everything which is unsightly, unhandsome and gruesome is the Surapadma Asura. And the Lord Skanda in His Glory helps us to get rid of him. So I pray that you may establish at least some of the Devaloka in your inner life. Om Sakti. God bless you.

Sixth Day of Skanda Worship

November 9, 1975

[On the background of the Rondo of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, Valentina entered the Sanctuary with radiance and victory glowing from Her whole Being. The range of colours and the music of Her emanations were exquisite, absolutely beyond words. In Her hand She carried the Vel, the Symbol of Skanda's Victory. And at the root of this symbology was the overwhelming glory of Her inner essence. We all felt Valentina's complete surrender and adoration of the Lord; it seemed that this ardour permeated the entire space!]

Valentina: Om Shantih. God bless you. I hope that everybody knows that this Concerto became, for me, a clarion call of the Lord Himself! Just listen attentively. Oh, what an illustration of Skanda's Glory! [Music]

Tonight is the Cosmic Victory of the Adorable Murugan, of the Lord with six heads each one more beautiful than another! All the jewels and all the flowers and all the Devas and all the Beauty of the whole Cosmos cannot surpass Subrahmania Words cannot describe the indescribable and the unutterable, Those who have the inner ear may catch my inner melody...as well as Beethoven's [Smiling). More than that I cannot, should not, tell you....

Student: These six days were terrific! Please say something more about them.

Valentina: What else could be uttered?! These six days and nights were a thrilling experience indeed! [Short pause while Sri Ganesha's Image was installed, at Valentina's request, by the Altar, together with Lord Skanda. Valentina, softly and joyously] Ganesha is His Brother! [Short silence...musingly] So you want "more!" I shall! It occurred to me that there are so many Names for One God. It occurred to me also that the rigid religionists do not understand the Cosmology; they are afraid of the Divine Names. They misconceive them, they misinterpret them, they cripple them through the wrong

approach...and don't they lose much?! Indeed, they exclude the multicolourous manifestations; they remove the Divine whispers from the Divine PLAY... [Silence]

Student: I must confess that it is difficult for me to call one God by many names.

Valentina: This is incredibly dull! To be so limited?! When you were a baby, your mama used to call you many names, but you were the same you, the baby of your mother! She called you many, many tender names and each one was true to her and to you too! When you grew up, well, she probably would say [In a very sober tone). "This is my son, John," and would have a rather disappointed expression on her face. (Laughter) Her"son John" continues to live and now again is called by many names in school, with friends, amongst his personal affections, then his wife it is the same, the same son of his mother, and how many names he goes through! Well, the One God has so many Names for each devotee who perceives either this aspect of His or that aspect of His. But it is the same One. Subrahmania is one of His very wonderful manifestations...

[Valentina enters Her Abode, in a short while returning)

Now who wants to go home? Probably nobody, but those who have to go, it is now. [Valentina turns to a student who recently experienced great distress) Dear one, we will relate to you everything afterwardsOkay? Now I will give you something nice. Looking at the roses surrounding Her Altar and taking one for the student] The best! Look. [Whispering] I'll give you another one!...Fll give you another one...I'll give you another one! Oh, this one. [Handing the bouquet of flowers to the studentwhispering) God bless you, my Child.

Before we shall "settle," maybe someone wants to come closer to me? Come!...Albert, do you see me? Want to come closer?' Are you okay?

Student: Yes, I'm fine.

Valentina: All right!

[Then becoming silent and absorbed, the exquisite eulogy to Lord Skanda is magnificently recited by Valentina)... These are holy, sacred praises to the Lord Skanda, descriptive of His Valour, of immense Power. It is said that He is giving both Bhoga, or the joy of life, as well as Moksha or freedom from Samsara. He is exceedingly beauuutiful! Beautiful! (Pause) And He has a Sakti, She is called Valli!

Student: Almost diminutive from Valentina!

Valentina: Indeed! Isn't it lovely?! And she is the daughter of the deer who was under the spell of some enemy and wandered in the form of a deer, who was Lakshmi. The deer gave birth to the beautiful child and that deer was Lakshmi Herself in the form of a deer for some mysterious reason. [Childlike]

Iknow but I won't tell you! And so, She was found by a hunter and She was raised amidst arough and tough tribe. But She was dainty and beautiful and aesthetic and refined, And She adored Subrahmania and She said that She will not give herself to anybody but Murugan! So She was praying and crying (it goes together, you have to weep when praying and loving, adoring Him and finally He stole Her from Her tribe, from Her peopleHe was the stealer of Valli! [Charmingly, childlike) That's in brief! There are many more things about it, but what do we need it for? Enough to know that Valli is His Sakti! There is another Sakti. The Lord sometimes is depicted with His two Saktis, two beloved consortsValli and Devayani. Valli is His great Sakti, so is the daughter of Indra... they stand for Will and Action. So that's it. [Pause.... Valentina's tone changes) It is very miraculous, but you know what?! Unless you are as pure as these roses and even a little purer, you cannot understand anything of this Cosmology, You can be fascinated by it (small wonder! who wouldn't be?!). But to take it for Reality, for Truth, only extremely pure in heart and very concen trated in their minds can. But regardless whether you can or not, whether you adore it or notHe is! And He is here! And (Tenderly glancing at the Image) look at what a beautiful, beautiful one He is. and Powerful! If you will medi. tate on one of His hands and arms, it will give you strength. Or His Lotus Eyes! that will give you very great inspiration. And what is most importantif you will only make an analogy between His killing the Asuras and see how similar it is when you are getting rid of your own asuras, precisely through the Grace of this Force, this gives hope, this gives joy, this gives gladness, and this saves you from the paltry life which drags you down and prevents you from attaining the Salvation from this mess of a life...which hardly could be called real life. It is so horrible, so monstrous, that if man would not have the wonderful chance to become divine, this life on earth would be unbearable. Indeed so. So that's it. Do you want

to tell us something on the tape? I would like to listen myself! Do you have anything at all from my recitations?

Student, Yes, Guru.

Valentina: Okay. Let's hear. [Vividly] First give me that barum, bababum!

[Laughter] Because it's the Victory! [The Rondo of the "Emperor" Concerto is played; at the descriptively technical piano passage) Hey, that's Peacock! [Showing with Her hand how he walks and then runs] Look at his tail; it is gorgeously spread...

[After the music a taperecorded story of how Skanda wanted to prevent the terrible sixday war is played. Skanda sends a valourous Deva as messenger to the place of the Asuras) The magnificence of the material achievements of the Asuras must have been indescribably superior if the Deva was so taken aback by it. Those Asuras can surpass even the splendour of Devaloka itself as far as the material luxuries are concerned, for that is what they live for similarly to our earthly magnates.

So what does it show? It shows that the achievements, the intellectual and artistic achievements, are even as a straw, chaff, nothing without the spiritual qualifications. And because of such achievements they dared to enter even the regions of the pure entities, the gods, the Devas. So Subrahmania, the Lord Skanda, gave them a warning and, of course, they did not take it. The end, however, was very disastrous for them and that end we are now celebrating on this sixth night; on the sixth night Surapadma and his retinue were...(Indescribably expressive movement of Her thumb down) finita la comédia... [Valentina goes suddenly into deep silence and sits motionlessly]

Student: [Timidly and humbly raises hand] Guru, you know... Your talk makes us... you know...so happy...please don't go into silence yet.

Valentina: I want silence but you need talk! Obediently yours! Well, let us ponder upon the Perfection of the Lord Skanda. Use all your... I wouldn't call it "imagination," but rather visualization; what is true, need not be "imagined." You don't have to imagine that this rose is the rose, do you? [Holding up a rose in Her hand] Just join me, because it is reality

for me. And let's give our thanks to that Force and let's pray that it might enter our hearts, that it might purge the heart from greed, envy, jealousy, competition, selfaggrandizement, attachment to possessions, and all that which makes a man Asuric. We will pray for that.

Only through love you can get rid of hatred and ugliness. So if you can love that Perfection, that Beauty, that Loveliness of Subrahmania, who is really so Beautiful...I think you will get rid of a lot of Asuras tonight, I really do, and it's about time.

We will close our eyes and we will think about His Vel; we will think about His Spear. And we shall associate with It all the glorious qualities I told you already the height of It, the width of It, the depth of Itall these beautiful divine qualities. If you will love the Spear, It will pierce your Asuras. And I repeat, it is about time! [Whispering] The Vel... (Deep silence Meditation)

American Thanksgiving

November 27, 1975

[Valentina enters the Sanctuary as the music of Schumann is played

Valentina: [Radiantly) Oh, "Carnival" of Schumann! This little part paraphrases Chopin and is called "Chopin." Don't stop; let's hear the "Chiarina." [As the music is played, Valentina sings charmingly, miming with Her hands the rhythmn) Chiarina, Chiarina, Chiarina, Chiarina.... Valentina, Valentina, Vaaalentina! [Laughter]

Student: You are Chiarina.

Valentina: No, I am Valentina! [Laughter)....Chiarina, Chiarina, Chiarina, Chiarina. [Then, musingly] That was Schumann's big love, and it was not as poetic as it sounds in this charming music. Although it was very intense, indeed, and was a tremendous event in the life of both of them. But, I am not a biographer; I am dreading biographies as such.... let them go to "X"

[A wellknown musicologist) for biographical details! Student: Why, may I ask, do you dread the biographies.

Valentina: Yes you may! Because it is none of anybody's business how Schumann loved Clara. I think biographers allow themselves as much intrusiveness as the worst intrudersthe relatives! [Laughter] Why dig into the privacy of the poor lovers and to expose their bedroom, kitchen and the diapers of their babies?! Most biographies show the biographers only! They greedily seek scandals and cute stories; they love to tell us that the best human loves usually wear out into prose, and the prose kills all the poetry, but...who does not know such axiom?!

Student: Never the love of Sivananda-Valentina wears out.

Valentina: Hey, you become bold on the Thanksgiving Day! How do you know?

Student: Because it's all very obvious.

Valentina: You are right. Love never wears out in the Sanctuary!

Second student: It is funny how we are more "harmonious in our unhappy loves than in our happy ones!

Valentina: Most probably, because it is easier to "love" somebody out of pity than to love somebody in ardour, admiration and happiness.

[Turning to the Thanksgiving Altar, lavishly flowing with fuits and pumpkins, flowers and candles) Make the red candles not so glowingthose thick fellows. They are so alarmed!

..All right. Now you talk, I listen. Ask questions; tell me something about whatever you want, it is your night, the night of thanks!

Student: Thank You, Guru, for all You have given us throughout this year and thank You for blessing me with an auspicious Thanksgiving Day.

Valentina: Ah.... Thanksgiving Day. It is a beautiful day. If the nation put aside even only one day a year in order to thank God and to love the neighbour, it is not too bad a nation! If we would replace the massacre of the turkeys with fruit, it would be still better!.... I heard on a local classical radio station, (between Wagner and Verdi!) The advertisements of the best restaurant! And.... they called turkey "the noble bird!" [Laughter) And, I cast my eyes down. But, aside from that, it is a very, very, really fine tradition, provided you do not gather too much in your stomach (Laughter) and do not have too many turkeys and too much football game for men and dishwashing for womenthen it is a good tradition! [Laughter]

So there are many "provideds." Still, I am with the best American, Abraham Lincoln, the best Abe in all the three worlds, really the best! God bless Abraham Lincoln! For verily, he meant not the "noble" poor bird, but the noble poor man! Verily, he cared for his people. Verily, he was a humble man and an honest one. And in the name of that great man, I thought of the best you.

Student: The best "me?" How would You describe the best in man?

Valentina: The "best man" practices gratitude not intellectually, and his gratitude is not only for his bounty, and not for his good, and not for his success, and not for the love and respect that he receives, not at all. His gratitude is for the ability to be grateful! He does not expect gratitude ever from any body, but, by the way, many people are grateful to the "best man" because he never expects it. It is rather ignoble to expect gratitude. Sometimes people who really owe us gratitude are the most ungrateful, but the noble man gets gratitude from another source. Thus, gratitude echoes, at times, from the most unexpected corner of the globe!

Student: I hardly can imagine anybody, even the "best man" who doesn't expect gratitude.

Valentina: Definitely, on a human level, it is very difficult, for human gratitude is always "for something;" it is not just because of gratitude! There is no element of sacrifice in the human gratitude. Whereas, in the divinely prompted gratitude, there is always an element

of self-effacement you are not grateful because somebody gave you something, but you are grateful because you, yourself, are able to give without considering it the giving.

....In the Bhagavad Gita, it is said that unless we sacrifice, we cannot invoke the Divine. And goes without saying, that if we do not invoke the Divine, we cannot be spiritual in our gratitude; we are just the shopkeepers.

Student: What is meant by the sacrifice You just mentioned that figurative sacrifice of the Gita?

Valentina: Sacrifices are of various kinds; they are not figurative at all, but they are subtle. Quoting the Bhagavad Gita, some sacrifice knowledge on the sacred fire of the Divine. Others sacrifice the breath the ingoing breath and the outgoing breath. Still others sacrifice their life force, regulating their diet and restraining their senses. Still others sacrifice by the repetition of the Divine Name. You really and truly are sacrificing your personality, your ego. You are offering your concentration, your heart, your love, and oh, aren't you grateful for the ability to do so? This is the subtlest gratitude which surpasses even the gratitude of the "best man!" Clear?!

Student: Clear for, perhaps, the "best man!" But... rather abstruse for the man of the American Thanksgiving Day.

Valentina: Not really! Do not put a stamp on your persondo not say that you are doomed to be carnal. Love more the heightsthe heights will lift you towards their transparency!

Student: How?

Valentina: If I shall tell you "how," you will make a turkey dinner out of it!.... You have to watch that your ordinary personality would not interfere. Usually in man there is always a clashthe outer wants to do the wrong things and the inner, the purer inner being, wants to do the right.

Student: It is difficult for us. Is it not just YoursChiarinaValentina?!

Valentina: [Smiling patiently] The outer is predominant in you! You do not want the still small voice of your inner being. One goes astray without the inner life, becomes disturbing to himself and to the other man, and even if he is trying to live according to what he considers his ideal, it is usually egotisti cally misconceived and misinterpreted. One becomes Rajasic and Tamasicoverly active or overly stupefied.

Let us open ourselves to theSakti which literally pours through us when we are poised within ourselves, expectingthat Flow, fully trusting. [Pause] God bless...America!

DECEMBER

Introduction to Chanukah

Ijust thought about the eternal struggle as such and the particular struggle of the Maccabees, the group of patriots, religious, not fanatical, but dedicated people, heroic people, valourous people, the Kshatriyas of the Jews, who had to protect the Holy Flame, the Holy Ark. Those very intensely devout people, who were fighting the Asuras, in my parlance "pagans" in their parlance [Smiling] I am sure they were heroes! There is so much local fanaticism usually involved that it is difficult for a historian to judge. But I am pretty sure the heroic spirit was there and I am absolutely convinced that the miracle of the Divine was there. Therefore, it follows, speaking now logically, that it was not merely a tribal revolt but it was the heroic opposition to darkness.

Be always able to coolly evaluate all the historical circumstances. Historicity is not necessarily true to actuality. Well, my main inspiration is to unite and never to isolate; to include, never to reject any flame, any dedication, any aspiration. And it is just wonderful that we are here in the name of this glorious victory of the Maccabees, united togetherthe Christians and the Jews.

Here again one should not mistake tolerance and benevolence for lack of enthusiasm for your own faith. Your own faith should come to you as the first obligation to God. Yet we have to understand philosophically that the Supreme would be anything but Supreme if He would tolerate only Chanukah and would exclude by some reason Krishna Jayanti! It would be no Supreme; it would be a very local dictator who wants to promote his own tribes, or troops, or creeds, whatever. Now, if even a human philosopher is far above such isolationism, we can well understand and accept the fact of extreme inclusiveness of the Absolute God, even of the Personal God, say nothing of that Supreme Eternal who is so above everything and everybody.

FIRST NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

November 28, 1975

[Outdoors, under stars and moon and much wind)

Ilove the Jewish prayers; I love them very much the ardour, the pathos, the humility, the spirit of repentance, and above all the praising of the Lord! Every prayer has the spirit of the One Eternal! "Give thanks unto the God of gods, the Lord of lords, to Him who performs wonders we pray, we shall be always praising Him. Selah." "I praise the Lord who is above all gods! That is the Absolute; that is the One!..."

Tonight we start the first Chanukah candle with the praise of the One. And we shall call it "The Praise." What does it mean "to praise?" To praise means to identify yourself with that which you are praising. You are not existing any more. But that which you are praising is existing in you. and when you say [Intensely] "Lord" just that you are already very quiet. When you praise everything which is beautiful, you are quiet. When you desire that beautiful, your trouble starts. Praise is the greatest power on earth when it is directed towards the Supreme, towards God. If you do not praise, you do not love.

How do you praise best? By your very being, by the beat of your heart, by the control of the evil spirit which prompts nonsense. You praise by knowing that which you are praisingif that which you are praising is praiseworthy. You have to be up to that which you are praising; otherwise your praise is not sincere. Your praise corresponds to your whole heart's transformation. when you are praising really from the heart, there is a transformation of the heart. You then become unto that which you are praising. Go now within; commune with the Divine; do not be in the darkness; long for the light! So we shall now, on the background of these strugglingwiththewind little lights, expose our light to the God who is above gods, who is above all strength and power and beauty and glamour and achievement, everything. Powerful as the lesser powers might be, they cannot overpower that One Power who is God. We praise that Power, praise that Power, not beg of that Power to give us a little of Its Power. We just praise the Lord with this little flame as well as with the flame within ourselves. We dare say we want it... [The wind blew the little light out). You see?! "We dare say we want it"; at that moment it went out. Put it on! So it is with your light; it always goes off, it extinguishes. Struggle! Put it on and on and on and on all the time. So these candles, to me, personally, symbolize precisely that "on and on and on and on," again and again, amen... Concentrate on the light within your heart which wants nothing but Truth, nothing less and nothing more. Concentrate upon it and appeal to that One and without a second, that Immense One who is God Almighty, for help to kindle yourselves, to extinguish the darkness, to not allow the darkness to extinguish your little light as the wind now attempts to extinguish the little light of the candle.

The lights are about to go off. We will have some music and then we will pray together. [Silence follows while the candles burn down until they extinguish themselves]

Om Shanti. Wondrous is the silence dedicated to God. Wondrous is the word directed towards the Supreme. Wondrous is the praise to the One who is above all created and uncreated. That highest Power, that Spirit Divine, that Adorable One we are invoking now through these holy lights. and the first candle of Chanukah now I called, as I told you, the Praise, the Praise of the Supreme. through praising we pray best, not through petition, but through praise. there is no need for petition, for the One who is above all knows our needs. But to praise Him one never can be tired of. The greatest inadequacy, the greatest sin, the greatest horror and tragedy is to forget the One who is above all. and so I am extremely grateful (here comes again the gratitude of yesterday[11]) that we can repetitiously and repeatedly praise the One through many methods and through many prayers. and I am very happy you are joining me in my prayers. During these little lights the burning of these little lightsI was praying for all of you.

When you sit down for an hour silently, motionlessly, totally opening yourself to the Divine, you receive; you receive the ability to express Him in life. And I pray you will not spill the silence of this night. May you be blessed. God bless you with the first light of the little candle which is called the Praise.

[11] *Referring to Thanksgiving Day*.

SECOND NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

November 29, 1975

...Last night, I told you that the first Chanukah candle...(suppose you will move it a little bit, it is windy)...is called "Praise... Praise...Praise." It is a glorious concept. Very few people know what "to praise the Lord" means; or for that matter, what "to praise" in general means. Everybody knows what it means to condemn or to criticize or to belittle! But very few know how to praise. If at all man praises, it is usually done with some personal connotation. But when we dare say, "Praise the Lord!"we put into it all the purity

we are capable of conceiving. We put into it all the ardour, all the glory, all the hope and all the beauty. To praise the Lord means, of course, to remember Him.

So the second candle, I deem, should be the "Supreme Eternal." How grand! what can be more beautiful, more awesome, more indescribable than the Supreme, and add the word "Eternal"Eternal, Forever. Now our first candle, then, will stretch towards that second flame of the Supreme Eternal, and we know why we were praising last nightbecause we had in view the Supreme and the Eternal. We do not waste our wits on praising the temporal, for when we praise the Supreme Eternal, we include the glory of everything in the Cosmos; what else is left to be praised?! You do not have to separately praise the rose or the moon or the music or the whatever beauty of earth. The Supreme Eternal covers up everything!for He is allinclusive. He is awesome; He is grand; He is unthinkableyou cannot really "think" about Him. You can perceive It; you can meditate It; you can adore It; you should REMEMBER It. But to think about It is impossible, for human mind is finite, and we are now invoking the Infinite! So that is, really and truly, about all I can say, because the words are impotent in comparison with the Truth I am now dealing with.

Student: Could we have a "part two?" Please don't go away yet! Valentina: "Part two?!" You seem not to be satisfied with the Unutterable?

Well, once you insist on the "chapter two," should it not deal with you visàvis the Supreme Eternal?! how you, the finite being, can approach that Supreme Eternal. Obviously that interests you more in your present state of consciousness than the Supreme Eternal Himself! It should not be like that, but it is... Do include some attribute of the Absolute into your worship and make it your personal God. The "attribute" could be anything, according to your rung of consciousness. It could be Incarnation of God, or it could be His Divine Sakti, or it could be anyone in whom you see God spontaneously and who lifts you from the mire of material existence. Your worship then becomes warmer; God becomes more approachable, most intimate, more close to your human heart, less awesome and less unaccessible. You can make yourself comfortable with your personal God... [Silence]

One of the most important things for the devotee is to be able to trust his god.

Student: Why is it that I am swayed and frightened even though I do believe my personal God?

Valentina: Probably because you are taking the appearances which are ungodly for something which is real. Rather erase them as the false picture. They might be disturbing but real they are not; they are phantoms. Real is only the Divine. The Supreme Eternal and His messengers are very merciful and very perfect. Therefore, when we are confronted with grief and sorrow and ugliness and inadequacies and disappointments and unsurmountable difficulties, we are to remember as quickly as we are able to, that this is falsehood, that this is the distortion, that this is a grimace of the devil. We should not accept it. Even when we are pitying somebody, even if something awful, which knocks into our heart requires our attention, we should not identify ourselves with that which is so horrifying, for then we lose the contact with the Supreme Eternal. Instead, do say, "This is the very distressful picture, but I do not accept that distress; I think of what is. And the 'is' is perfectthe 'ls' of God."

Third Night of Chanukah

November 30, 1975

[As Sivananda-Valentina was again and again relighting the flickering little flame and protecting it from the wind, smilingly) The Maccabees had more patience even! So all this isjust right, just part of the Lila!...(After all the candles were finally burning) Om Shantih. God bless everybody.

Ithought about how little there is of admiration and cooperation among religions and even among heroes. The only cooperation we see is that among the enlightened. True Illuminati do not ever oppose each other that never could happen. Whereas, the unenlightened, be they even the great warriors, are extremely concerned about their own set ideas, yet they overlook the principles of others. [Smilingly] This is also a reminder and should be included into your Remembrance.

Now, because we started this wonderful observance by declaring the praise and continued it with specificationthe praise of the Supreme EternalI feel the prompting to call the third Holy Flame "Rededication," not only in the case of the Maccabees, but rededication of everyone who is seeking, who is believing and who is fighting. You have to rededicate the flame. So the third candle I call "rededication."

Let's rededicate ourselves to that which we love best, understand best and practice best. The latter is of paramount importance, for without practicing that which you know, well, you are not wise; you really deserve a name of a fool. He is learned who practices that which he learned. Rededication?!

[Silent prayer, meditation and prayers for the deceased follow]

Concentrate please. Don't feel tired or bored, very, very inappropriate vibration. But concentrate upon these little flames, how gracefully they disappear into the Invisible, and love the Invisible who is the Author of the visible events. It would be nice to again return to the story of the oil which lasted eight days instead of only one day as it was for all most evidentthere was such little amount of it. So apparently the Supreme knows the amount of oil of each life and of each candle. The oils burn while they are necessary for god to work through them in every human life. and now that we uttered so many names of the deceased who were so dear to some, we should send the vibration of love towards them parallely with the dwindling away of these lights, sending impar tial love to those who were loved by you as well as to those whom you don't know, as well as to those ancient heroes who set this very lovely observance. Expand your vibration of love towards all those living in the body and those out of the body. It really does not matter, for the Supreme Eternal watches over all. Om Shantih.

(Looking at the tiny flame that was the last one burning and whose name was the Supreme Eternal, Valentina joyously exclaimed] The "Supreme Eternal" is the winner!

Fourth Night of Chanukah

December 1, 1975

[After lighting all the little candles without any interruption from the wind) No trouble! God bless little flames! Good evening. the fourth night of

Chanukah. and this happens to be the first of December. You all know my favourite, "Remember December!" And December is a mature fellow! he has much on his good

shoulders, the broad shoulders; the eleven months are climbing up to his big shoulders. And I suggest every one of you, through remembering December, has to also remember all our wonderful observances, all resolves, everything which happened from January to this December. so this is the remembrance, the month of Remembrance. and...why not call this lovely fourth flame of Chanukah, "Remembrance?" Let this candle remind you that you ought to remember that which leads you to the Supreme Power, to that Supreme Eternal which I discussed very intensely on the second night of Chanukah. You have to remember your principles; you have to remember the many wonderful concepts which lead you to the Supreme Eternal.

Now, for instance, you look, and I offer you to look at this arrangement of flowers [A huge and most artistic arrangement of exquisite assortments of flowers surrounding a charming statuette of Mother Saraswati) and if you are concentrating upon it with a pure mind, if you really rejoice at it, you create a new Samskara of aesthetics and of purity and of appreciation. I really and truly enjoy this arrangement immensely. I do not take for granted a single petal of these wonderful flowers. In the evening I bring them for your delight to the Garden. All day, however, they stay with me in my little Hall and every single morning when I pass by, I smile to them and say, "Hi..." when you approach something beautiful with conscious attitude, you are creating a good Samskara, a good impression, a good accumulation! And if you are, by the same token, withdrawing your attention (does not at all imply escapism!) from the things unbeautiful, the objects which are creating a bad Samskara, you are remembering December in the right way! I now drew your attention to beauty [Turning to the arrangement of flowers). But supposingly you have some kind of a provocation and you immediately are identifying yourself with that which provokes you. What happens then? You get a samskara which is a burden and maybe a poison. You get some kind of an accumulation which is stored within your subconscious mind and which is your enemy, which will hurt you eventually and probably right away also.

Now, in the remembrance of the right Sadhana, of the right attitudes, you have to immediately recognize what constitutes the poison and to reject it.

This kind of remembrance is a very helpful process for your growth, for your development, for even your physical health. For the more you smile from within, the healthier you are also from without. And the less you smile from within, the more tense and consequently the more damaged is every cell of your body. So the remembrance of the Rightness of the Supreme makes you also think of your higher Self. This manifests in the building of the right cells in

your body, the right moods and the right aspirations in your mind. "Remember December" and be blessed! The wonderful month, really lovely!

Fifth Night of Chanukah

December 2, 1975

....and now... the fifth night of Chanukah and it is, of course, the fifth night of meditation, for aside from the fact that we are observing Chanukah, we are also attempting to increase the ability to sit down quietly for a long time and be absorbed in one thought, in one idea, in one aspiration, in one flame which we light for the praise of the One.

The fifth candle I want to call "Quiet," for without quiet you cannot even hope to go into the meditation, in fact, into anything worthy of "going into!" Quiet...Candle number five, do you know that you are called "Quiet?" I hope you won't flicker in the wind too much, because you are to be quiet!

Quiet is of many kinds. There is quiet and quiet. A quiet of a stupid man is different from a quiet of a clever man. A quiet of a clever man, in turn, is different from the quiet of an intelligent man. A quiet of an intelligent man is different from the quiet of an illuminated man. By all means, I wouldn't want anybody to have the quiet of the stupid man, the Tamasic man, the quiet of the man who is quiet because he is stupid, that is no quiet That is impotence! If a man is quiet because he cannot be agitated, he is really not much of a strength, is he? He is just kaput! We don't want that, do we? What we want is the quiet of the next degree of the clever man. The quiet clever man tries to be quiet. The intelligent man knows how to be quiet. And the spiritual man not only knows how to be quiet but is quiet. When fully enlightened, he is the personification of quiet. The enlightened man is quietude....

Find out who you are, little candle. And find out who you are, little souls! How much of quiet you can practice. We have to start to practice this wonderful qualitythe quality of quietude. You see, you have to start it not only because it is profitable to you, to your personality, to your character, to your health, but because you cannot hope, (let's not use the word "meditate" now because it is too darn hackneyed) you cannot invoke the higher

forces, you cannot pierce the veil of ignorance, you cannot open yourself to God and His Angels, or the Deva, if you are not quiet. If you are not quiet, then everything knocks into your consciousness except the higher forces. Whereas if you are quiet and if your quietude is right, is of higher categories, then you can hope to invoke the Supreme Eternal, yes, even the Supreme Eternal!

The question may arise, "Can the evil spirit be quiet?" there is a wonderful Catholic prayer: [Intensely)... "And protect us from the evil spirits who roam all over the world trying to corrupt the mankind." "Who roam all over the world!"yes, they do roam in the physical world, in the mental world and even in the spiritual world. There is such one with the scorched wings who is even trying to corrupt the spiritual man. There are degrees of corruption and there are degrees of evil spirits. The question is, can they be quiet? Is quietude known to them? (Pause) Positively not! Even in the highest regions where they are not the little devils but the great satan with the scorched wings and with the sad beautiful eyes; he might have the whole universe, but he will never be quiet. Never...So if you want to protect yourself from the evil spirits, which roam the world over, trying to corrupt man, you have to equip yourself with quiet. That is another way of looking at quiet and understanding its grave necessity... (Silence) [During pranayama]

...How can you tell whether you are quiet or not? It is very interesting. You can tell concretely by the feeling of gladness within you. It is a specific heighteningit is a thrill, and yet it is a quiet feelingthat combination of gladness, of happiness, of bliss together with quiet. Whereas, if it is just excitementyou can call it gladness and anything you want, but without poise, it is not spiritual. But if you have the quiet, the quiet mind, the quiet heart, and yet the sparkling rainbow within yourself of all colours, all of them splendidly combined the gratitude, the kindness, the love, the everything of lovelinessit gives you great gladness. Also you can tell quiet by the absence of desire.

In Vedantic school, desire is compared to disease. it is said that desire signi fies illness of the mind; it is sickness. So in the moments of quietude, you are bereft of desire. If you are spiritual, you do not have any desire. You know why? Because you have everything! That is a very funny thing, isn't it? You've got everything, so what is it to desire? We usually desire when we are beggars, when we don't have this and that and that, forgetting that we have everything because we have God. Now, during this practice of special pranayamaspecial in its deliberate calmone can realize what I am talking about, because physiologically, you are influenced by the rhythm of your deep quiet breath and, mentally, you are influenced by your very attitude of longing for quiet, and spiritually you are definitely also influenced and sometimes even enlightened because the Spirit in this

profound stillness starts to manifest Itself through you. And it is an awesome feeling of the smallness of personality which sur renders to the greatness of the spirit. And the personality wants nothing but that Spirit. By that go. If you have a little bit of what I told you, know for sure you have a spiritual glimpse.

Sixth Night of Chanukah

December 3, 1975

Om Shantih. The sixth candleand I shall call it "The Choice." Why the choice? Because all these nights I have been giving various great concepts, and there is a choice to either be striving towards them or to be the echo of their opposites. It is not very easy to be in the world and not of it. Concretely speaking, there is almost a hypnotic power, a suggestive transmittance from the mind full of worldliness to the mind which wants to go towards spiritual values. It is interesting how quickly man forgets the Goal and forgets the Truth.

Usually the world is full of suggestions of fear, old age, mortality, disease, cheat, betrayal all kinds of things which have absolutely nothing to do with God! But it is depending into what we put our faith, that we receive. Apostle Paul said it very shortly and very, very concretely: "Carnal mind leads to death and spiritual mind to life and peace." Choose!

Well, how can you maintain the highest idealism and combine it together with the life you are leading outside the Ashram, outside your studies, outside your attempts to meditate? It is all that which Paul calls "carnal mind," which leads to death, because man accepts everything but harmony. Harmony, peace, lovelinessall these are hard to believe for the carnal mind. Purity is absolutely the thing which carnal mind does not approve of. So how?...how can we? [Pause)

Choice what is choice? Choice is to select something which you know for higher value. Now, if you have such choice, it goes without saying then that you have to ignore as much as it is possible that which you do not choose. But you have to remind yourself quite a few times a day that you made your choice. In order to cultivate the spirit of intelligent optimism, the spirit of faith, of dedication, of opposition to the carnal suggestions, you have to be all the time on guard. You ought to choose all the time between the world and the Spirit.

And that's all I wanted to tell you that you have to have in mind the choice between the Spirit with Its Perfection and Absoluteness, and morbidity, danger, degeneration, in short, misery. So if you do not want that suggestion, it is not that you have to shun the world and to shelter yourself and be fearful of it and to artificially oppose it and pretend that it does not concern youthis does not help! But if you truly turn to the Supreme Eternal, who is Perfect, and all the time will remember It and practice that quietude of last night, then you will be the new race; you will be the light unto the others. and it is to make the choice...it is called the Choice...

Now we shall contemplate the Choice. Each one of you inwardly make, not a resolve, but precisely make the choice. Choose and be quiet and project it into the space. And let everyone in every corner of the universe benefit from our prayer this moment, everyone! Let the sick become well; let the sinful become virtuous; let the unhappy be happy. You just throw into space your choice of rightness. God bless you. [Silence]

Seventh Night of Chanukah

December 4, 1975.

Sixth light of Chanukah was called "Choice." [Pause/ It made a deep impres sion upon everybody because apparently you all are quite aware of the neces sity to be able to make your choice and throughout your life follow the chosen path. Sounds solemn?! It is not only to choose your path, but it is to choose everything from everything and know the why of it.

Ifeel like being in the Realm of "A Conscious Approach." Our ability to choose depends very much upon our conscious approach towards things. So here is the name of the seventh candle! The right approach, for instance, towards a human being the good, the bad and the mediumis to not approach the beast in him, to not approach the man in him, but to approach the God in man. This is the right approach. If you are dealing with the God in man, you acquire peace. You just don't care. You can only laugh at the man's inadequacies, for you really and truly do not care about them. It is then that you can say: "Only God I saw!" You don't care for small things, well, this is consti tuting the right approach, the right attitude. If you love god, then only you can understand man. You

cannot love man first and then God. You have to put that Supreme Eternal first into your life and consciously practice towards It.

So the conscious approach is very, very important and it constitutes, of course, the conscious life, the conscious element within yourself. Unconscious man, mechanical man, cannot choose and he cannot approach things correctly because he is swayed and drifted, because he all the time associates himself with his impressions. whatever impresses him, whatever tickles him, whatever irritates him, whatever provokes him or, for that matter, thrills him, with that he associates himself immediately, identifies himself and becomes it. Now, if you have the right attitude towards the creation and God, the Creator, you manifest it in your daily life pretty clearly. If you have the right approach, you will not commit the sin. If you have the wrong approach, you will commit the sin regardless what you are practicing. You can be practicing, outwardly, a very austere Sadhana and yet it would be not right in the eyes of the Supreme Eternal, if your attitudes are not right. Now the safest way to lift up your atti tudes and to make them your help, rather than your hindrance, is to not con sider anything yours but to consider everything God's. If you consider every thing God's and not yours, you somehow become quiet. You do not care, really; you do not care.

It also corresponds to the idea of selfsurrendering. that is verily the won derful attitude, the best attitude the conscious selfsurrender. All this again presupposes conscious life, for if a man is not living consciously, if he constantly is drifted and forgetful about his goal, then definitely he cannot practice this right approach, simply because he is all the time tempted to practice the wrong approach!

When one practices regularly his Sadhana, the conscious approach becomes strengthened. One then sits, walks and talks on the background of offering himself to the Supreme Power. If you offer everything to the Supreme, you will not commit so much faux pas. It is just really a certain way of lifenot to do any thing before you offer it to the Supreme. Just as we now are offering every light to the Supreme, you can offer every word; whatever you say you are offering it not to people but you praise the Lord! You are giving it to the Supreme with thanks, with modesty, not with vanity as when you look for man's approval of your aesthetics. If you are singing on the stage, you have to dedicate your song to the Supreme. If you are eating a sumptuous meal, you have to take only the prasad, but the meal is offered to God. This is conscious approach.

Conscious approach, in mundane life, in mundane parlance, means just understanding and remembering what you are doing. Conscious approach, in spiritual parlance, is remembering the Supreme. That is what Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita: "Dedicate everything to Me," whatever you are doing. First, "offer it to Me," and then do.

Eighth Night of Chanukah

December 5, 1975

Om Shantih. God bless everybody.

Last night we culminated many concepts by understanding that without the right approach towards our problems, as well as towards our beliefs, we cannot manifest the Supreme Eternal in our lives. Now let's make it even more concrete and even less abstruse! and let's call the last candle of Chanukah, "As you sow"...I add this eighth conclusive spark, "As you sow," to strike the fine cord of the seven jewels strung upon itthe pure seven lights. Let it be just three little words, "As you sow." Sow to God, to that Author of everything. Otherwise you will be reaping the ill effects which will separate you more and more from the Divine, from the Truth.

You are sowing not by deed so much as by attitudes, precisely by approaches, by thoughts. Only he who sees God in man can overcome the Law of Cause and Effect. Only such a one sows correctly and will reap correctly. To that effect, Lord Krishna said, he who sees Me in all and all in Me, will never be separated from Me, from the Lord. and he who, through the protracted practice of Yoga, harmonized his vision and sees equally everything, he is established in Truth. He, in other words, will be one with the Supreme Eternal.

Now, the way towards it is to remember also the end of these three words"so will you reap." It is an old adage but unfortunately forgotten. During the day, man is sowing all the time to the carnal personality of another man and of himself, but not to God within another man. You are sowing to the Opposer of the Supreme, and he is very glad (the opposer) because he recruits an army of such collaborators who see only the discord, only the disharmony, only the ugly things in another man. And I grant you, this is very easy to see because another man is not acting the way the Sattwic man would act. The other

man doesn't see God in you either, so you say, "Why should I see God in him?" The other man provokes you; the other man has ugly opinions about you; the other man does this, that and that, is demanding, and that is why you do the same thing. In other words, you identify yourself with the other man and you separate yourself from God. If you will reverse it, you will succeed. [Pause]

This practice, this sowing to God, should go further if you want the Supreme Eternal. We should also see God in ourselves. I am never tired of repeating that very important Truththat we have to see God within ourselves, that we have to practice the Presence of the Supreme within ourselves. The moment we find God within ourselves, we do find Him in Mary and Jane. If we do not practice the presence of God within ourselves, we shall never see God anywhere. It is in proportion that we discover that Self with a capital S, that we can discover that same Self within another man. If we see in ourselves only our temper or our greed or our suspicion or, above all, our endless, hungry desires, well, we forget that there is the Higher Self within ourselves.

You may, of course, be puzzled how to see God in a very unpleasant situation or man or in yourself who is full of all kinds of troubles. The misery of mankind, and speaking specifically, of aspirant world, is that man cannot separate the flame of the Divine from the sin of the undivine. The sin is the disease which covers up the Divine. Well, you can call it...you can call it [Smiling] an inflammation! It is an inflammation. So what can you do?! You put some kind of a nice ointment and have things well cured!

You have to bless even the "inflamed" man; you have to see the god in him. Just like...well, like this little candle. There is such flame in every man and this flame is God. In the case of the Saint, the holy Spirit is very much more pronounced. That is why people are flowing to the Soul who is cured from the "inflammations," and who can expose that Divine spark. But in every single person there is the same flame, lovable and beautiful, which can take a shape of either a genius or a prophet or a saviour. Everything huge and beautiful and luminous is of god, and when it is revealed in man, then the inflammation of sin is burned.

The Lord created this universe and the Bible said [Intensely] "And behold, it was perfect!" The same thing Upanishads tell us, that "Tat Twam Asi," "Thou art That," thou are identical to God, Perfect! The process of discovering this identity is called Sadhana and Yoga... As you sow...

Days Before Gita Jayanti

Let us feel, and not think, that it is December, the month of the great obser vances. And to my heart, it is extremely significant and stirring and touching that Gita and the Gospel of Christ can be practiced simultaneously, and one affirms, emphasizes and confirms the other. It is very, very beautiful....

It just occurred to me and that is my Sloka for tonightthat "what is a day for the sage is a night for the fool," and vice versa. It means that the sage considers all the silly interests of an ordinary man as unreality; it is for him night! Whereas for an ordinary man the sagely attitudes and wisdom is night; for the fool, for the worldly man, day is his folly, his foolishness, his imaginations, his frustrations, his ignorance. For him it is full day; it is reality. Whereas for the sage, the realized man, or even for the highly developed man, all these things are embarrassingly unnecessary, stupid, meaningless. So that's my Sloka!"what is night for a sage is day for a fool," and vice versa. And you can pick up whatever you feel most and love it. And write to me that Sloka! I love to read a thousand times the same sentence! I do not care for many books, and I do not care for many words! Ican read one sentence from the Bhagavad Gita forever! If instead of your usual outpourings, you will write it to me, you will not bore me, I assure you!

Gita Jayanti

December 14, 1975

[After the recitation from the Gita]

Gita is not the book; the Bhagavad Gita is the Word of God to man. Arjuna represents humanity; Krishna represents the Godhead. Sometimes people...ask silly questions: "Is it all true historically?" Why should you believe a historian who is conditioned by his own nervous system! Biographies are seldom depicting the great man, but. often are reflecting the indigestion of a small man who writes about a great man! Historicity hardly ever is accurate, but Krishna is always true! Do not bother about historicity.

If you truly are the student of the Bhagavad Gita, the devotee of the Divine Word, you cannot take this life too seriously, neither do you neglect it. You are acquiring wisdom and equilibrium. The Gita offers you Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. You can take any one of them or preferably all of them. The Gita requires of you the right attitude towards life. It does not ask you to ignore life, but it asks you to consider worldly life as the not real life in comparison to the spiritual life. It asks you to perform the service to one and all and to perfect your work, to make it as excellent as possible and yet not to be attached to it.

What is most important for every student of the Bhagavad Gita, for that matter, the student of any religion or any philosophy, is to be in the life and in the world and in the society and in the family, but not of it, to be free. If you, for instance, would do what I have just asked you and send me the Sloka from the Bhagavad Gita, I expect you to love it and to return to it several times during the day. Otherwise, it is the same thing as any kind of traditionalism. You do it because it is the date of the Bhagavad Gita; you mechanically pay tribute, and you forget all about it.

Here, I stress it again and again, we are doing things just.... just diametrically opposite. We are not remembering certain dates only because the calendar shows them, but because these remembrances are adorably beautiful and because we want to deepen ourselves and to save ourselves and to prepare ourselves for the Immortality! Just as grand as that! Therefore, every observance is taken by me personally as something which is of paramount importance and excludes everything else in all the three worlds! And I hope it somehow inspires you and influences you to some extent, maybe to a big extent!

So what I do pray for is that whenever you are reading or hearing the Word of God, and this time of the Bhagavad Gita, you take it as the only thing important and live on its background. Believe me, you will be the winner! [Pause]

Now, the Bhagavad Gita primarily deals with people of several temperaments and inclinations. Although the teachings of the Gita are for one and all, there is the esoteric aspect of it and exoteric. The exoteric aspect is very clear: be good and do good, and meditate a little bit when you can. The esoteric aspect, of course, is far more complete, subtle and inward."...Know that if you will practice Yoga with your mind fully concentrated upon Me and with Me, and make it your central interest thou shalt come to Me, there is no doubt about it, I shall talk to thee fully, without any omission." This is for the inner man, the one who understands the esoteric implication of the Lord's promises. There is nothing

else to be known when one is submitting with all his ardour to this ONE ESSENCEthe Krshna!

The Lord, several times, mentioned that He considers that Yogi the highest Yogi who concentrates upon Him wholeheartedly and full time, all the time, perpetually, regardless what he is doing. In other words, it is to practice the Presence of the Supreme all the time; it is to adore this Presence. It is to consider It the only reality. It is to live all the time with the Blue Krishna! Just like the Gopis every one of them would drop everything she was doing the moment she heard the Call of the Flute! And ran there immediatelyleaving everything! Husbandwhat's a husband?! Children what are children?! Household what's a household?! It is Krishna, the lifegiver. Run to Beloved!

Student: There is much eroticism in this relationship of Gopis to Krishna!

Valentina: Esoterically, of course, this is not an erotic affair of the Gopis and the Krishna, although there are such crude minds who suspect even this, who do not understand the ecstasy of the spiritual love and who see only eroticism. This is an offensive attitude. The love of the Gopis signifies the exaltation of the soul which forgets all the mundane ties the moment it hears the Flute or the Call of the Supreme. Now, Gita is really and truly that Flute. Throughout all the pages of the Bhagavad Gita there is a Call to make your life perfect, not only correct.

Let's now drop all talk and we shall hear the Seventeenth or the Eighteenth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. (Speaking to Her "Secretaire Generale"/ I hope you are smart enough to have it nearby. And by the way, I will bring the Bhagavad Gita here the one I love to read. Put those manuscripts there. [Referring to the handwritten Gita with Valentina's commentaries). It is the Birthday of the Bhagavad Gita! I will be right back, and you set the tape and listen aptly to it, will do you immense good.

[Valentina returns, Her personal Gita is placed on the Altar beside the Image of Lord Krishna)

Did you also listen to the "Gita Mahatmayam" the glory of the Bhagavad Gita? [Students affirm) It is from the Puranas, and as you heard, to have even the book in proximity is a blessing; it is a purifying influence. The vibrations of the objects are very strong. If you, for

instance, have in your abode the books or the paintings or the photographs of doubtful tastethey live their own life and they emanate the impure emanations...no good! The emanations pene trate your nervous system and influence you. If you are surrounded by holy and artistic objects, by wonderful written thoughts, it influences you too. Of course, receptivity here plays a great role. Some people are more receptive to the beauty; other people are more receptive to the "unbeauty." Nevertheless, it is of paramount importance to never use the evil objects, to shun them, to surround yourself by beauty. Beauty does not necessarily mean luxury. If you keep on your shelf the right book, the right Image, the right flower, the right scent, you will attract the right emanations from above also. All the Devas will say, "Ah, it's nice to be here!" And vice versa. Goes without saying that to have such Perfection as the Bhagavad Gita in your proximity is a blessing! It is a very great blessingso is the Bibleanything of Truth.

Well, let us relisten the extracts from my beloved Seventeenth Chapter. [Tape recorded recitation of Holy Mother reciting Slokas from the Seventeenth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita]...A momentous distinction is often marked in the Bhagavad Gita, and it is the difference between the two Natures of God: the phenomenal and the spiritual. Man of lower consciousness is a material man. He deals only with his lower nature, his obscured mind, his stubborn ego and perhaps his slightly brighter reason. But God's Nature, the Divine Sakti, the conscious Power of the One Eternal, is unknown to the unevolved man. This timeless Sakti, which is above the Cosmos itself, is not perceived by the man of matter, the "carnal man."

Student: How do the Gunas affect man's evolution?

Valentina: Everyone worships according to his predominant guns or element or force or characteristics. You just heard about gods and demigods in the Seventeenth Chapter, did you not? Even they act according to the predominant gunas. And accordingly, man either evolves, stagnates or degenerates. TamoRajas does not contribute to evolution; it is only Sattwa which liberates.

Student: What about those who don't know the forces which condition our worship and are told to worship the One God, considering any other worship pagan? Valentina: Pagan?! Yes, that is how every man of small consciousness labels

that which is not his religion! Whatever word you may use, the fact remains that man cannot worship the way the priest tells him or the Scriptures teach him, much as he would want to. But he worships the way his consciousness is, or in the parlance of the Bhagavad Gita, "according to the prevailing gunas!" The rabbi and priest themselves are not able to worship the "One God" unless they are realized souls or at least very pure and very Sattwic! They can quote the Scriptures all they want, but to worship the Divine, really and truly, with all heart, one has to be Sattwic or pure or harmonized or spiritual. Unspiritual man can go to the church, but he will not worship God; he will worship his own concept about God. It is only the pure man who can worship purely. The impure man, the TamoRajasic, or the passionate man, never can worship purely. But everyone is worshiping something!

Student: How about the atheists who never go to synagogue?

Valentina: Well, they worship something in which they have faith. They still are worshiping that is to say, people have some kind of faith in something. Most people are worshiping "His Majesty Dollar"...even when it is inflated! [Laughter] Well, this is the Rajasic worship, don't you see? They can pray to God to improve their material condition, and this is the Rajasic prayer.

Tamasic man worships entirely horrible and senseless objects, concepts and things. Ghosts, Satan, diabolical cultsall this nonsense is pitch dark and monstrousit is Tamo Guna au naturelle!

The Sattwic man adores God and asks nothing, but gives everything.

Student: What does God need? How can we "give everything?"

Valentina: It does not mean that "He needs," but, it means that you give your heart. That is how the pure man prays. He just says: "Lord, I'm here." [Touching Her heart/ That is how he prays....

[Turning to the student in charge of the candle lights) Put off this pink stuff and I will see the blue lights of Krishna. Now we shall repeat "Om Tat Sat."

(After Japa) The intellect is not very well trained in most people. It is difficult for you to follow the recitation; it is difficult to memorize; it is difficult to concentrate, but the purified heart in every human being is good. Some hearts are veiled, but fundamentally, the heart is the seat of love and devotion. So regardless whether you understood or not, your heart benefitted from this Japa. The heart has its own evaluations. And now we shall repeat the Mantra again but in a more rhythmical way. The rhythm of this very potent Mantra is important, and you have to love it. So we will do it in that rhythm. (Valentina illustrates how to pronounce the Mantra) Everyone will vibrate "Om Tat Sat." First we will do it together. (The Mantra is repeated collectively)... While chanting this, you do not accept anything but the Truth of God. You sacrifice. your ego, your personality, at the Altar of Om Tat Sat or Absolute Truth. You purify yourself; you do not have anything else but peace. [Japa follows]

The wonderful word "Yajna," or sacrifice, is meant in a very subtle way. You are sacrificing when you are not interested in your creature comforts, when you are forgetting about your egotistic desires and preferences and socalled "good time" in the human parlance. Now, when you are sitting here for an hour or so, and at the best of your capacity are repeating the Lord's Name, it is a form of sacrifice. You are sacrificing your time; you are sacrificing your human preferences, and you are concentrating without any motivation, but just out of pure of a sacrifice. love, upon the Supreme. That has an enormous purifying effect on a human being and promotes his evolution very much. But one has to do it not because of that, but because it is right, because it is beautiful... Om Tat Sat

With the word "Om" we glorify the Absolute God. With the word "Tat" we renounce all the expectations of the reward for our Sadhanas. And with the word "Sat" we proclaim Truth and allGoodness. If we work wellthe culmi nation of our work is "Sat." Faithfulness, devotion, rightness and dedication to the Supreme is Sat. But if your works are done without faith and humility - they are Asat or false, untrue, unacceptable to God! And ponder upon the Glory of the Gita, please do!

...Though engaged in the performance of worldly duties, one who is regular in the study of the Gita becomes free. He is the happy man in the world, he is not bound by Karma.

Just as the water stains not the lotus leaf, even so, sin does not taint him who is regular in the recitation of the Gita.

All the sacred places of pilgrimage dwell in that place where the book, the Gita is kept and where the Gita is read.

All the gods, sages, yogins, divine serpents, Gopalas, Gopikas dwell here.

Help comes quickly where the Gita is recited, and O Earth, I dwell at all times where the Gita is heard, read, taught and contemplated upon.

Itake refuge in the Gita and the Gita is My best Abode. I protect the three worlds with the knowledge of the Gita.

The Gita is My highest science, the ineffable splendour of the Spirit

Now, with all your heart say OM TAT SAT and be blessed!

Christmas in the Air

[In the Garden at deep night, after the meditation class)

Sivananda-Valentina addresses the students:

When I think about Christmas, I think about two great Souls, Apostle Paul and Vivekananda, in connection with their sayings which are illustrating best my approach to Christmas. Paul said that, for God, there are neither Gentiles nor Jews but only Children of God. And Vivekananda: [Valentina inde scribably] "I don't care for the festivities and excitements of Christmas. I would rather fast and pray. I would wash His feet with the blood of my heart!" [Silence) That was his approach to Christ and Christmas; he would meditate that.

Now we are approaching Christmas and it happens after the Chanukah which here we took in its philosophical and cosmic aspect. Chanukah is celebrated by Jews the world over, and Christmas is celebrated by Christians the world over, and most people separate the two! And there are some who go as far as considering it a sin to equally respect and celebrate both! There are such attitudes amongst both Jewish and Christian religionists. But we are to combine, not separate, to include and not exclude, to love and to appreciate and not condemn and criticize. And because, in the essence, there is only One Truth which ramificates Itself according to the demands of nations, their needs at certain historical periods, and so forth and so on, because of that One Truth it is really very fascinating and not at all difficult (that is to say, if you are big enough!) to simultaneously worship everything worthwhile worshiping. I am pretty sure the whole Super mundane Space is "asmiling" at us and is joining us!

Now, the question may arise, "Why so many religions if the Supreme Eternal is One?" Precisely because He is Supreme and He does not limit His Children as the Children choose to limit Him! It is almost equivalent to a question, "Why, if the rose is considered the queen of flowers, there are other flowers?!" I am pretty sure no one would dare to ask such [Smiling ironically] "wise" question! Even if the rose is the queen, the royal flower, it does not mean that a little field daisy has no right to exist. Every flower is perfect. Really, flowers are perfect, every one of them; every single flower is perfect! Just think about it and name a single flower, let it be a wild flower of the fields and forests or let it be an extremely royally cultivated flower of the best gardeneach one in its own way has the perfection of the petals and the aromas which no artist and no scientist could ever reproduce. The very same thing about the true religions of God....

So long as we praise with utmost sincerity and utmost faith and practice that which we believe, [Quietly, intensely] and practice that which we believe and preach, the Lord accepts our faith. "Among all the Yogis, he who, full of faith and totally merged in Me, worships Me, is considered by Me the most devout..." And again, the Bhagavad Gita, no one but the Bhagavad Gita, which is emphatically part of our December meditations, "Many are the ways and various are the paths and on whatever path the true devotee approaches Me, on that very path I meet him," says the Lord.

...In its origin, each religion is of God; in its application, it is limited by man's ignorance. Originally, religions were revelations, but when popularized by and established, they lost their spirit and became a dogma. If you understand Yoga as union with Godyou are turning a new page of spiritual experience which reveals allinclusiveness and not isolationism, hatred and prejudice. Look at each religion as the highest attempt of human mind to go

beyond the mundane...but do not ignore the follies and cruelties of the same mind which, in the name of the religion, commits the crime against the religion itself. The more one knows, the more one loves and sees; the less one knows, the less one understands and perceives. Be spiritually exalted, not religiously pious.

[Smiling) It just occurred to me, and I hope all of you will agree, that exoteric Christianity has rather strange views about Christ. It is either complete traditionalism or else it is exaggerated abstinence. "Don't be artistic! Don't look aesthetic. Make yourself as unattractive as possible. Don't dance. Don't go to the theater. Don't enjoy poetry." The cant of the puritans "Don't, don't, don't!..." Goes without saying, there are restrictions which are sensible! Any hygienist would agree that it is not contributory to your health to smoke, to drink alcohol, to take dope, etc. Why should you poison yourself?! But by the same token, why should you go as far as combining the taken for granted restrictions, with the psychological deprivation of joy on the high level?! It really is going "far!"The Divine forbids only the undivinethat which makes you miserable afterwards. By that go. Whatever indulgences or participations drag you down, diminish your intelligence, impoverish your life force, are definitely taboo. That which gives you innocent joy, which makes you younger, healthier, brighter, which vitalizes you without the ill aftereffects, above all which deepen your nature, expands your horizons and refines your whole being, is a blessing for you. How can God deprive His Child from that which makes His Child happy and aright?! But, the limited, indiscriminate minds put everything in the one basket. Sure you shouldn't waste your time on the silly or suggestively impure, talentless and gross pseudo art. But for Lord's sake, do not ban that which is its opposite! That's enough for you. I certainly won't take a cannon against this poor sparrow. [Silence)...Always, always remember Christ's gift to you: "I came to give you joy! I came to give you more life, to

make your life more abundant!" He was a man of Sorrow; He was a man of Joy...His tragic sacrifice was for a Cosmic purpose... Above all. He is the Absolute Spirit. And in the name of that Spirit, which transcends even the Cosmic Sorrow and the Cosmic Joy, may we all be blessed.

[At Class next morning]

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Student: I was wondering, especially being Christmas, why is it that we cannot be happy?

Valentina: Because you remember wrongly and forget strongly! You have to remember the Divine and forget the temporal, whereas you do the reverse, hence the 'why' of your unhappiness. One can't be happy thinking all the time about his little ego. You have to forget your ego either in work or in prayer or in being good. The moment you think of yourself, it is a very, very wellknown factyou have one problem after another. Either you do not think that you are doing as well as you should, or you think that your ideals are too high for you and there is no sense to aspire so highly, or you think that life is not worthwhile living. Or else you think that life is worthwhile living if you will become a little speedier and get as much pleasure as possible. But anyhow, you are not happy, regardless what you are thinking.

He is happy, in the sense of harmony, who is doing as much good as is in his capacity, doing this good mentally first and then factually. I think of Gurudev Sivananda with great tenderness this moment, for this man proved in his life, in his very breath, that the only way to live life gracefully is to forget the ego completely and to give, give, give, give, give! Such ones are approaching the Christ Spirit regardless to what religion they belong, regardless what doctrine they are practicing, regardless what they are preaching, for really and truly, we are preaching by our character and not by our sermons. That is what I wanted to tell you, that when you will get up tomorrow morning (may God give you a good night to rest nicely and to assimilate what I am telling you) your first. thought should not be about yourself. If you will think about yourself in the sense that you are unhappy or happy, or that you want. this or that, or that you are going to do this or that, your day will not be too successful, I assure you.

If you will get up and first of all think about the Indweller within you, the One who gives you life in your nostrilswhat is called by all mystics the Presence of Godor if you think of your environment visàvis God, you will be splendidly fulfilled during the day. You may start intellectually if you cannot feel it spontaneously and spiritually. If you are able to do even that, it is a prayer, a form of a prayer, of surrender to the Spirit. That is already the marvelous start.

Student: Thank You, Guru, for the highhigh, but what can I do when I'm pulled by the frolicky Christmastide all around? The silly traditional nonsense?! Valentina: Very interesting, is it not, that we have to deal with such prob

lems! The point is this: that "Christmastide," precisely, is the word which I eliminate from my vocabulary, but this is the expression and conception of the whole world except very spiritual people. If you listen to the radio, which you do, and read the newspapers, which I hope you do not do too much, ahh.... you probably are quite aware of what I am talking about. And of course, you are the shoppers and the runners and the everything else. And the atmosphere is all over the world the business atmosphere, the excited atmosphere, the restless atmosphere, the strange atmosphere really, strange if you will ponder upon the source of Christmas. And I am talking about it not critically, because it is too wellknown a fact to criticize even. Neither do I analyze it, because it is all too obvious to analyze. I just remind you, and this is not obvious to youthat you are caught into the vibrations of the world more than into the vibrations of the heavenalways, everywhere and inevitably, because the certain part of you is very vulnerable to these vibrations. And that certain part of you I want to heal now, this moment, if you will respond to what I am telling you.

Behind that hustle and bustle there is a miraculous event of the Birth of Christ. But even ifIwould dwell much upon this glory of the Birth of the Spirit on Earth, you might take it onlytheoretically. At Christmas, every priest all over the world, is talking the same thing. Itisnot what I am telling you, but it is how I am feeling it and how I have realized it which Iwant to transmit to you.

Student: You say "behind the hustle and bustle." But in my case the family dinners and giftbuying are such a burden.... I just despise all this nonsense, yet I do it. Valentina: Reverse your attitudeyou will be poised, invulnerable. If you

truly, really, with all your heart, all the time, think why are you doing all the wrappings, why are you buying the Christmas tree, why are you accepting the invitation of a friend, of a relative, to have a Christmas dinner which, if refused would cause a great offense to a person, if you will ask yourself.... Don't you see that although everything is done in a rather clumsy and naive way, it still is done in the name of a very, very, very mysterious, great and sacred event! Majority of people, if they are running all the year in a very pragmatic and very restless, material world, sometimes in a sinful way, sometimes very sinful wayhow can they suddenly on the twentyfourth of December become different?! They cannot. So that is why we hear on all the radio stations about the stuffed turkey, about the," Be sure to visit this sale and this sale and this sale," and all this in the most vulgar way. How can you expect on Christmas anything to be different if all the year it was like that?! For a savage, the celebration of anything is always to stuff his belly thicker than on

ordinary days. And that is what society is, a savage society. But still, everyone in his hidden aspect is the Child of God! And that is what is very important to think about.

If Christ was tenderly smiling and is tenderly smiling to everyone who remembers Him, even in a naive and silly manner, doing very many funny things in the name of Christmasse, in the name of the Birth of Christ if He accepts everybody always, and forgives everybody always, and meets everybody on whatever level, be that the worst of the criminals or the best of the Saints,well, why can't you sacrifice your preferences in His Name similarly?!

Student: Why do You think He "smiles tenderly" at our grossness? Maybe He is shocked?

Valentina: [Smiling...tenderly] No, He can't be 'shocked' because He is Divine. It is you who is shocked because you measure little things. One fool a little more sophisticated than another fool! If Christ could forgive His murderers, He certainly would forgive your Christmas dinners, which, incidentally, give so much joy to your parents and relatives!

Student: Still, there are too many things which one simply considers worthless. I'd rather be in the Ashram than with dear relatives.

Valentina: Conquering of your moods should be your Sadhana!"I don't want to do that and I don't want to do this and it's tiresome to be in this hustle and bustle," and all this thing. It is, sure enoughI explained to you already and I repeat again, there is a lot of naivete in many things, a lot of silliness, a lot of mercantilisma lot, a lot, a lot. Knowing all this, you still take it patiently, smilingly and charmingly, and make the best out of it. And make not only the the best out of it in the sense that you are such a maaartyr, but very joyously, really enjoy it. Make it the way it should be and not the way it degenerates into what it shouldn't be!

...If you, while performing the boring things, would concentrate upon the most mystical event of the Birth of the Godman two thousand years ago, if you would think about it as something of paramount importance, nothing, I absolutely guarantee you, would touch you, regardless what you are doing with whom you are talking, what you are buying and to what you are listening You may say, "This is impossible for me," and I will tell you back:

Why is it impossible for you if you here, every day during this year, the 1975, were. reminded about the holiest and the highest?!

[After the outdoor Nada Yoga Class]

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...I suggest there should not be a single night which you do not dedicate to at least short remembrance of Christ. One has to do it all life, but on Christmas, one should do it much more. So you, with a very simple and very quiet heart, just remember that the birth of the Godman is now, here and now nearing, that it is that season, that it is that momentous period which you have not to pass by indifferently.

Ennoble, brighten, purify all your activities; make them very happy. Then everything around you, not only near you but far also, shall be blessed by your attitude. That is my prayer, and I want you to be with me in this prayer. Om Sakti. Remember Christ. [Silence]

[Looking at the huge, old, three times as tall as the house evergreen tree, being decorated with lights by the students] I am all the time admiring this victorious tree! You can turn your head and see it...and the star. (Shining on the very top of the tree] And why I want you to look at it is not only because it is poetic and because it is a symbol of glory, but because there is something very powerful in these lights and festivities if you take them correctly, if you take every light as a prayer. It should be really a live light; little candles would have been so much livelier (so much more dangerous, of course). (Laughter] Lights, the real lights, the fire, is always an invocation of the Grace of God, and in this particular season, it is Christ who is watching over you, whose Grace you are invoking, whose precepts you are practicing, at the best of your ability at least praying to be able to practice them:

His main precept is Love. "Love God with all your heart and thy neighbour as well and as much as you love yourself." Love thy neighbour as thy self, when taken mystically, spiritually, becomes very clear and very significant. It is not just to be neighbourly as ordinarily the exoteric Christianity preaches, but it is to deeply meditate that there is One Spirit in all and if you love yourself as the Spirit, then you love your neighbour as the Spirit. If you love yourself as the Spirit, as the God animating your body and your mind and your emotions, and you know that the very same God is animating the best and the worst of

creation, you then love the neighbour as you love yourself, because you love God in the neighbour. That's what it means.

Student: But haw can I see the "spirit" in a man who treats me and others as the beast?!

Valentina: Analyze the good things of your neighbours, as well as the bad, but equally offer them to the Supreme Judge! You, in this particular Christmas time, are not any more the judge of anybody. It is not that you suddenly become to such an extent above good and bad that you forgive, forget and practice absolute love. You cannot do it; it will be maudlin and artificial if you would try. But what you really can do is to pray for equality, for utmost inner hospitality to everybody, not to criticize even the worst of the worst...because Christ did not. And in the name of that Absolute Love, you become very much more forgiving. So this is another way of celebrating Christmasby practicing this kind of Sadhana Sadhana of indifference to evil....

...When I pass by the welldecorated Christmas window, I say a prayer and I thank the people who made me say this prayer! Their decorations show that they are going out of their way to please me who passes by their window or gate. It is pretty, it is lovely, it is charming, it is festive. Look at it this way, you will enjoy, you will bless everything and everybody, and everything will smile back to you.

Look at how many people will admire our enormous Christmas tree! | know I do, and I do not take for granted a single little bulb. It is so beautiful! Go and congratulate Bradley [The chief climber!) on my behalf! [Laughter] And God bless you. And Gertrude also she was a very good "mama" today, cooked a lot of good soup. So now feed Brad. Okay? And God bless you

Now let's unite together in one beautiful prayer. I always pray that everyone should be able to unite, truly unite. But outer unification costs absolutely nothing. You might be outwardly organized, yet the moment there is some provocation, you will quarrel. That is true, not only about families and soci eties, small groups of various movements, but it is true about governments; it is true about nations; it is true about the whole Cosmos. The outer unification costs "tuppence ha' penny" as they say in England. Not much, really.

Student: How can we unite so that the deterioration does not set inwhat You just said is so true! We "unite" and then argue, etc.

Valentina: Spiritual unification only is lasting and true. When you unite with another man in the name of the same Spirit which is animating you and another man as well, you are united. Then you cannot do anything bad towards another manyou know why? Because by doing bad to another you are doing bad to yourself. If the other man has the same Spirit as you doit might be covered up with many, many veils, it might not even reveal itself, but if you believe in the underlying Oneness, you, by hurting another man, also hurt the same Being within yourself.

And you know that only too wellthat every time you are hurting somebody, you suffer.... you suffer.

What does the real unification do for you? It invites God amongst you! But when you are disharmonious, Devil is between you. The spirit of ugliness, the spirit of discord, the spirit of hatred is everready to prompt you to do more of wrong.

Let's now unite silently, very simply, inside. That's the best thingwhen it's inside because you do not have to try to impress and show off, and because you live alone with your inside; nobody knows it. So you just can and should check yourself: are you united, are you in harmony with yourself?! Mind you, that's the point with yourself. If you are in harmony with yourself, you are in harmony with the whole creation. If you are not, then you will have troubleeither here or there. That is why prayer and silent hours are so beneficial. They help you to deepen your aloneness, for in truth, man lives alone and man dies alone. Who do you have your wife, your children, your friends? They come and go. You are not united with them unless you live alone with Spirit. Then you can be united with another man also in Spirit. And then death cannot separate you either. This is trueI tell you, it is true [Japa follows]

Among the thousands and millions of people who repeat the Name of Christ, there are a few selected ones who do it in conscious way, who are praising the Eternal Perfection and not just local, traditional Christmas. And that Mantra which we were just repeating is equivalent to all the praises of all the nations and all the. religions, for it is dealing with One Mysterious Supreme, And it is very wonderfully connected with all the praises of every single heart! That's Glory! Hari Om Tat Sat....

Traditionally, it is believed that Christmas is the time of miracles, and it really is. The greatest miracle is when you really want the spiritual Christmas! The next miracle is when you start the sweeping, washing and polishing of your hearts! Well, this Mantra is quite a bit of a polish. Hari Om Tat Sat, Om Tat Sat Om!

And it is a very, very great joy for me to "polish the heart." Let us polish our hearts, make them nice and clean. Hari Om Tat Sat....

CHRISTMAS

December 25, 1975

[Deep Silence]

It is hard to talk about the Unutterable and I will not attempt...I will talk only about that which can be uttered. The Unutterable aspect is the mystery of Christ and the Glory of Jesus. Why is it Unutterable?... Because the more you utter it, the less you understand it... Certain things can be perceived only in silence and prayer. These are the things which transcend the human logic and the human intellect. That is why Buddha would refuse to discuss the undiscussable, precisely the Unutterable, the That which cannot be explained logically and could not be mathematically proved. I often mention Buddha when I think of Christ and Christ when I think of Krishna or of Buddha, for verily, there is only One Who manifests Himself as the Glory in individual Messengers.

Yes, I mention the Glorious Divine Names...but to talk about who was Christ was He Godman or was He an ordinary manis absolutely an idle, meaningless talk! Live the life which Jesus instructed you to live and you will find out what He meant and who He is. His Precepts are clearcut and very precise. And one of the most glorious precepts of Jesus the Christ is to love, to love, to love. Every breath of His life was nothing but love, and on the eve of Christmas, the Birth of the Spirit Divine, it is very wonderful to really show love, not conventionally, not with a commercial smile, but really and truly from within. The outer hospitality is a wellknown Christian mannerism. But woe unto us if we use the mannerism of love. Man, in his limitations and restlessness, knows not love. In his hunger for spectacularity, man cannot be silent and blissful even on the days of worship. Ponder

not the distorted human love which manifests as a little charity, a weebit of generosity, a halfsweethalfsour smile of hospitality, no, no! Ponder upon Christ Love which is at the heart of the whole Unmanifested Creation, yet which is so, so poorly manifested in our lives! Just think about it, make it your sole conscious effort to wonder and...and to weep too!

Human consciousness is impotent to live the Love of Christ. What does it make out of it? Either a pietistic exaltation or moralitymaudlin and all sprinkled with rose water and glycerine! Or else the sighs of the mystics about the impossible! Where is that true Mystic Ardour of Christ, that grave yet tender light which makes all the dark crooked paths obvious and impossible!...

And now I want you to join me in the particular thought of total wellwishing and love! Bless everybody, everywhere, in whatever way he wants to be happy. That is about the best way Ideem. It is wonderful to love...

Shall I say, "Merry Christmas," or shall I say, "Beautiful, blessed Christmasse?!" You can say anything. Make your Christmas the way you feel it best. Be sincere and pure in all your feelings and dealings always...but much more so on Christmas.

"If two or three gather in My Name, I am amongst them." So because you all gathered in the Name of Christ and not in your names, He is amongst you. The Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Forgiveness, the Spirit of Beauty, Peace and Truth is here because you gather in His Name and not in your name. Well, may you be blessed in His Name. (Prayer, deep silence)

[The above was uttered by Sivananda-Valentina with indescribable simplicity and quietness)

Advent to the New Year

Prepare yourself for the New Year, to not offend the advent of the new beginning by the old trespasses. Do not trespass against the new possibilities, Pray to be filled up with the Presence of the Divine Grace which will prevent you from more trespasses. Just pray for the ability to continue to be very positive during these few days.

Student: Why such special warning? Isn't it the same life, be it 1975 or 1976? Valentina: If you want it the same, then don't call and don't hope for a

Happy New Year! But you do hope even if you are the pronounced cynic. You can and you should prepare yourself for the New Year or else it is really...well, embarrassing to wish each other "Happy New Year" like a parrot and to start the old year again! No. We had a marvelous 1975no complaints. It was very wonderful, but we want an improvement even on the wonderful thingsimprovement of the growth of our consciousness, not the outer events for which we are extremely grateful, by the Grace of Mother Lakshmi. It was magnificent year, but we want the expansion of our consciousness. In order that you might expand correctly, scientifically, you have to work on yourself these few days, perhaps with more gusto, for it is a dramatic, momentous reminder. and simple it is not because the more you work on yourself, the more you notice the negativities, and the more, actually, you are attackedattacked from the invisible lower strata.

The Kali Yuga now is on its last legs, and because of that, the negativities are extremely gross, more pronounced than ever before. Practically everyone is influencing another one negatively. The one who is consciously struggling against the negativities and struggling for Perfection is in minority, but such a one is a coworker of the Forces of Light and such a one is really a treasure on the Cosmic scale. Such a one is called a "man on the Path"; it is not an ordinary life anymore. I hope you all have chosen your Path. Student: How can one measure if he is on the Path?

Valentina: Whether you are on the Path or not will show itself by your conscious struggle for Perfection. Eleven months are behind you! And they were permeated with such, such intensest Beauty and aspiration! So if you are attempting to remember it, if you are struggling hard, you are on the Path. But woe unto us all if we "make believe." You are on the Path if you know the right attitudes to the past, present and future! Before you can have glimpses into the Eternalharmonize your attitudes.

Consciously watch the experiences profitable to your soul, there will be much spiritual value. Do not let them skip, do not forget them, remember them! Student: Guru, I must say, what You have just said is so true, for there is such joy during these experiences with You. They surely surpass all the joys we have in our life.

Valentina: You are right. For what is real joy?! Certainly it is not of physical life; it is not real joy when you get many Christmas presents and you get a boon of some kind and a bonus and you get an increase or anything like that. This is not the joy; this is a pleasure, and it passes away. Even if you will get all the treasures of this world, you will not be able to be joyous about it intensely all the time. It is an excitement and intoxication which has its reaction. So defi nitely this is not the kind of joy I am referring to.

The joy you receive from the inner experiences cannot be bought and cannot be borrowed and cannot be created and cannot be received from the per ishable pleasurable things. But it can be derived from the depth of your own inner life. And when it is derived from this depth, it is lasting; when it is realized, it is Everlasting! Those who know joy, know God. Those who do not know joy, do not know God. Let's concentrate on that motto also. The more joyous, the nearer to God. The more joyous, the more vibration of rightness and of life towards the whole living world, towards everybody around you.

...Let's make a little agreement between you and me! Let us not allow ourselves a single unpleasant word which may hurt somebody, a single despondent thought, a single reaction which contradicts joy. Let our pleasure be elegant and let our joy be divine. High enough for you"

Student: But, Guru, life is so harsh and people are so crude and angry all the time. How can one get by, how, even for a few days left in December, can we hope to have such a great time?

Valentina: I absolutely do not guarantee that the life will not present you with the impressions which will not provoke you! You might be confronted with anything. These few days which are left in December are as unpredictable as other days. We can have anything at all. But let's agree not to allow ourselves to lose our control, always referring to this Source of Joy from within. Heighten consciously the vibration of Joy through...it really is up to you to find out, it is intimately yours.

Student: But I need a prescription! I don't have this intimacy with the Above! Valentina: Well, if something comes your way which you do not enjoy, close your eyes and say, "Within myself is the Spirit which is above pleasures of this world, which has its own, different pleasure, the Joy which perishes not, which is above the sorrows of this world too. It is just a completely balanced Radiance, beautiful, and I want to live in it. Okay, I

am confronted by something very unpleasant or maybe even painful or by somebody who wounds me with either the tongue or the emanations or the mentality." We cannot say, "I don't accept it." It became a very hackneyed slogan indeed. Many schools, exoteric, popular schools, are using it now: "I don't accept evil." Like fun you don't! You do accept it! You just speak like so. But what I am now stressing is to close your eyes and go into inner calmness, into prayer and contemplation and derive that joy. The Name of Christ whom I hope you were intensely remembering during these few days gives joy! I hope the "prescription" will work for you!

Another student: Guru, we are so stupid to forget, for we get everything we need for life and for the forever too. All is in what You so generously offer us! There is no excuse to not be exalted!

Valentina: [Smiling] Really so! Your heart is where your treasure is. If you would put all your hearts into Satsang, you would not spill, and you would not spill if you would realize the great necessity of Satsang. The emphasis upon the association with the Purity and wisdom is stressed in all the Scriptures. Some Indian sage mentioned along these lines, that although there is hardly anything worthwhile in this imperfect life, nevertheless, the two great boons compensate this deceptive life and they are: the company of the noble souls and the true poetry.

"Oh, the tree of the world! Thy poisons are infinite. But this aweful Tree beareth two sweet fruits of exquisite flavour the Nectar of Poetry and the company of Noble Souls!"

Don't you think that these two nectars are the only two superior pleasures which compensate all the very unreliable pleasures as well as poisonous experiences of this life?! It is true. So every time we communicate on the level which surpasses the everydayness, we partake of one of these great joys which are nectars. Yes...And whenever we are endeavouring to practice some of our Observances and Sadhanas, we are partaking of the great Poetry of the Forever. So you are rightno excuse for long uninspired faces! Exaltation can easily become yours, for in this little place, we have the two boons of the godsthe Satsangs and the great Poetry too. And would it not be most wonderful these few days which are left in December to concentrate on precisely what I told you now, on the enormously purifying power of Satsang and on the poetry of our Observance?!

[Silence and then..../

Let's end with a short meditation... Let's pray together to the Spirit of Christ to protect us from all undivine moods and movements within ourselves. If you will be able to practice that which I just told you for a few days, you will pave the road to the really healthy New Year. For the last thoughts are paving the road to the new beginning, the last thoughts of either the endeavour or the work or the month or the year or the night, for that matter, the life. You know very well that if you will carry into the sleep the ugly impressions, you probably will have the nightmare, if into deathhell. So it is with the New Year. If you want the bright year, or at least the right start, you have to prepare yourself for it very seriously. That is a form of sacrifice. You sacrifice your willfulness; you submit yourself to the Will of God. You do not allow yourself anything which is not acceptable by the Divine. Pray for strength...

New Year's Eve

December 31, 1975

[Shortly before midnight]

Sivananda-Valentina entered the Sanctuary radiating extreme Beauty, Charm and Joy. She carried two large linen calendars 1975 and 1976. Playfully, yet with a mysterious air about Her, She electrified everyone through the dance of Her Hands and Eyes. Seated before Her altar, She spoke...nay, Love spoke to us all)

We have how much time? Fifteen minutes? Twenty minutes?

Student: Twenty minutes.

Valentina: [With the air of animation, precision and speed] Well, I'll put twenty hours into these twenty minutes!...All over the world there is now excitement at this moment, in those parts of the world where the midnight is approaching. In other parts where it is over, it is a certain aftereffect, but still the current vibrations are everywhere potent and

significant. Some people do not even understand why so significant. And, as a matter of fact, some ask, "Why is it a New Year? Why should it not be every day New Year?" How can it be every day? It cannot be! You have to have the "new beginning!" It is a psychological necessity for everybody, for every single human being, and it is a spiritual wisdom for people who understand the cycle, the new possibility, the new beginning, the rededication. It is a very significant moment and I pray now.

There are people who pray during this night; there are people who meditatethese are minority. Most people take alcohol and make merry, but even then there is an instinctive urge to somehow mark and celebrate the event, to make it different, to invoke the forces of pleasure and the forces of plenty by indulgence. There are again some romantic moods and hopes and celebrationspeople hope for renewal of their passion or for meeting a mate. There are all kinds of currents and undercurrents.

In old Russia, there was a custom for young girls to wait for the miracle on the eve of the New Year! And they were looking in the mirror trying to see the beloved who will come to them. The candles were on each side of the mirror, giving an effect of a long corridor in which the girl was supposed to mirror her fate, and they were looking and gazing and gazing and gazing till they were completely senseless! (Laughter) And then they were imagining (Miming an excited, silly girl's tone). "Oh, I saw him! he was soooo handsome! I'm going to marry this year!"

So you see, everything is practiced during this very mysterious and strange and unusual night!

Okay, come on. We have few minutes only. Who wants to make a wish? Say something, Stu, what do you want?

Student: I want to love you more and more.

Valentina: You want to love me more and more. Granted! Fine. All right. Who wants to say something else? Barbara? What do you want?

Student: I want to come nearer to you more and more.

Valentina: Okay. Well, that is very similar. And what else? Jay? Student: Just to carry this night always all throughout the whole year.

Valentina: You want to carry this night into the 1976 and forever. It is a beautiful night, that is for sure! [Spontaneously, vividly, turning to another stu dent) Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candlestick! [Whispering) What do you want, Jack?! Come on. I'll grant you!

Student: Eternal love for You.

Valentina: Okay. Tell me, somebody, who is grateful for 1975? (All hands are raised) Aren't you right?! [Raising both Her arms high) Beautiful, beautiful year!

Student: I'm grateful for 1975 because it was with You.

Valentina: Write a poem tonightor rather this morning. And what else? Who else wants to say something?

Student: I was thinking before You came out how many times You made my heart so alive, You just gave me new life.

Valentina: Well, I should say that you are one of my miracles. A sophisticated "hippie" philosopher! [Laughter] And now such a mensch! Ahh, you are okay. You see? I have the transparent, white orchid. Think I'll give it to you?! /will not! I have to think it over! I might!

Albert, are you here? No? You are missing something...Who else wants to say something? Iwill not mention any names, whoever wants to say before 1976, go ahead and quickly make a wish and say it aloud. Yes, Jack? Say it loudly with microphone!

Student: I just wish in 1976 to overcome all "hangups."

Valentina: You want to overcome all "hangups." that is a good wish, Jack, very fine wish. Great! One absolutely wonderful quality you have, Jack, and that is sincerity; it is really a great quality. You are not afraid to say the thing which is not too sophisticated, and you are not afraid if you will not sound right. You just say what you feel. And God bless you, Jack, you are okay. God bless you.

And by the way, we have to pray for overcoming all our obstacles we have to. We have to have more faith in the Supreme Spirit who is above everything. everybody, who is everywhere and who is in you. And you have to give Him your work and to demand nothing. You have to pray to be worthy, that's all. And that is the best prayer, for 1976, to come to us with the strength, ability, endeavour to overcome our obstacles in that new beginning. there are many, many, many obstacles and most of them are manmade obstacles, all the troubles of this world are made by man. not by God. So to overcome them, on our own we cannot, but to invoke that Spirit Supreme we can. and this is the most noble prayer to not demand and not to tell God what to do but to give our will to His Will and to love such surrender. And that's what we are going to do before it will strike twelve.

The atmosphere was increasingly intensified. The tempo of Sivananda-Valentina became like accelerated music] Very little time is left for the old friend 1975. We have just a couple of minutes left before the New Year. Let's unite in silent aspiration, in silent wellwishing, in silent submission to that One Spirit, to the Supreme Truth of God. Think about it sincerely. Love it. Pray. Pray simply.

A moment of deep silence and then the loud sounds of the street noises celebrating the midnight hour are heard. Valentina, vividly, indescribably, dynamically, ardently, as if She saw the Beloved] RAAMA!

Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Rama...

(Japa follows

...Rama stands for Victory, for Glory, for Rightness, for Beauty, for everything Perfect. It is a Holy Name... Raising Her glass of grape wine] Wet your lips with the symbol of life.

Who wants my white orchid as a symbol of purity, loveliness and love?! Who wants it? Everybody wants it! Who deserves it? Now come on, voice! To whom should I give it?!

[Several short dialogues between Valentina and the students follow. There was such sparkle and wit and joy in Holy Mother's Play. She gave roses to the ones whose names were mentioned to receive the orchid, as well as the ones who voted! Finally the name was mentioned the one She wished to hear... Then with spontaneous childlike sweetness She gave every rose from Her Altar to everyone present)

...Did everybody get a flower? It is important to keep it the whole year, so that you have it for the whole 1976, first in the vase and then in the book... [Silence]

We shall pray together. We shall pray for the welfare of one and all here in this room first of all, wishing each other much strength to continue the life of rightness. What is the life of rightness? Spiritually speaking, the life of rightness is not just morality, the life of rightness is the remembrance of God and the adoration of that Supreme eternal. This is the right life and I pray for such life. [Silence]

The world is immersed in falsehood and crime and materialism which is so dense that it is suffocating. So we pray for the advent of the Spirit into our own being. That is what we are praying to start a New Year with more strength than we had in the past year, and to be very grateful for the past year, for there was so much beauty in it and there was so much Mercy of that Supreme Eternal. So we have to be very appreciative of it and we pray for more appreciation, for more gratitude. (Silence)

Gratitude is almost unknown to a human heart. People are grateful only when they receive things; they are not grateful inwardly. And even when they receive that which they crave, they forget very quickly, take it for granted and want more and more, more and more. So we are praying that we might not be so greedy, that we might be more content, that we might be appreciative of what we have already, and then only we have a right for more. And then our "more" will not be so gross and so selfish. We will want more spirituality, more purity, more inner beauty. That is our "more." Let's pray for all this. [Silence. Japa]

It is good that we repeat the invocation in the neutral, ancient language, because then it is for everybody. There is no partiality, there is no religious split. It means Absolute Truth and entire Perfection of God.

Hare Om Tat Sat...

And may this Mantra lead you into the 1976the Truth and the Perfection of God to be your guide, your principle, your inspiration, your strength.

Hare Om Tat Sat...

Now let us together wish well to our government, mind you! Let's remember it now on the verge of the new beginning. Just say this Mantra and wish well to the people who are leading this country.

Hare Om Tat Sat...

And how about the whole world?

Hare Om Tat Sat...

How about your little world? Your families?

Hare Om Tat Sat...

How about somebody you love best?

Hare Om Tat Sat...

How about somebody you are worrying about most?

Hare Om Tat Sat...

How about your little selves? Now that you prayed for all, you deserve to pray for yourselves.

Hare Om Tat Sat...

[Quietly] How about The Light of Sivananda-Valentina?!

Hare Om Tat Sat...

And in your hearts think of whomever you want to bless and he will be blessed. I promise. For now is a special hour.

Hare Om Tat Sat...

[Deep Silence] Sri Maha Saraswatiaya Namaha! Om Sakti. And blessed New Year to everybody, everywhere. Thank you, Mother, for 1975...

EPILOGUE

My prayer and my dream I will share with you. It is said occultly that twelve people if and when organized very, very thoroughly, when unified in the Divine, when purified from the pulls downward, can produce marvels. (Mark two little words, 'if' and 'when!' For if it would just be the occult number, any organization, including the General Motors or WTMI[12], could produce "marvels." Well, you know that much, I hope!)

I have now multitudes visiting me, but my dream is to establish only a small group of wellunited, unusually pure and dedicated, such who can twentyfour hours a day be mentally connected with me! What couldn't we do then! The projection of benevolence to each other and to one and all, to the safety of the world itself becomes not a Utopian dream but a scientific fact, for thought is a power. Welldetermined thought is a double power. Purified thought is a panacea. And united thought is a heightening of all our immediate surroundings.

Now, if these twelve are able to put everything on one card, to forget the ego, to ignore the pitfalls and the temptations of the mundane life, to strive to open their centers towards the descent of the Divine Saktiwell, then marvels will happen in the lives of such fortunate twelve and those who are in the radius of their thought. Then only we can perform Japa in the right esoteric way. Then only the meditation can become a real throwing up the immense Light and attracting the same. This throwing way up the Light is the ascension of the human which simultaneously invokes the descension of the Divine.

...I told you several times that there are some rare esoteric groups which live for nothing else but the dedication towards the betterment of the whole world, its safety and enlightenment. And there is nothing else that interests them to sit down motionlessly the whole night and pray, or repeat Mantra for somebody; to save somebody, to direct somebody, to guide somebody, as well as to purify their own. being, nothing else interests such holy ones. All night long such immense concentration! Well, don't you think that such projections are far more beneficial and potent than any propaganda, any philan thropy, any lecture, regardless how brilliant!

It is difficult enough to find just the good people, the people who are honest, who are aspiring, who mean well. What I need is more than that! All this you are, but I need more than that. I need "the twelve!" I want the twelve who can concentrate like those wonderful monks I just described the twelve who can work in such a way that they will attune themselves not alone to the projected Truth but also to each other.

[12] Popular radio station.

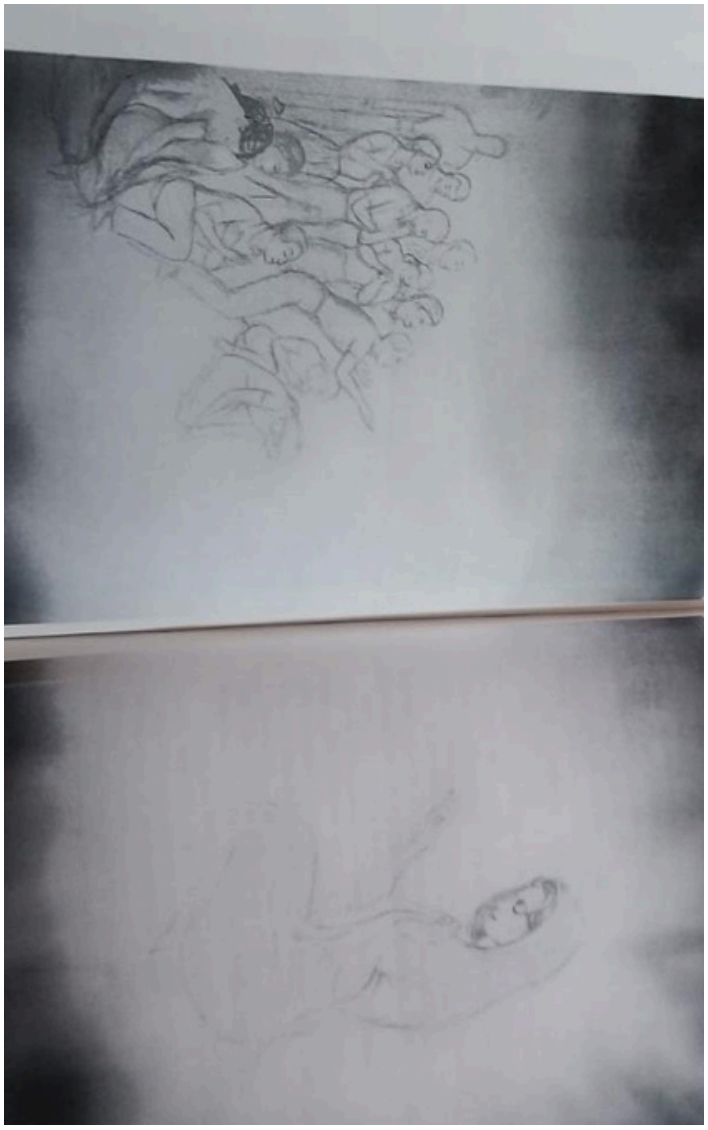
The Divine Brotherhood is not a fanciful imagination! Whenever people are working without the craving for promotion (be it the promotion of either their institution or of themselves), there is the Divine Life. Out of multitudes there might be one or two who are fit for such Divine Coexistence. Such one or two are the candidates for my "twelve!" Such do not need the promotion. the ambition, and they do not have any institutional fever! The magnet of such becomes so strong that they do influence whoever comes their way. And if nobody comes their way, they influence the very Space and they leave the invisible records whose impact sooner or later will hit the right receptacle. First we only "influence." But when we are powerful enoughwe control the evil and arrest ugliness.

Yesss.... In such spiritual Community it is a spontaneous, kindled, entirely natural unification which in itself gives wings. "The twelve" do not need anything else! They are working for the Godly aims, for the transmutation of the human and for the fulfillment of the Divine Plan. That is the only thing...It is so fascinatingwhat else can one want in life? Or are they working?! It is the Divine Force, really, which works through them.

If that be the Will of the Divine Mother, my little retreat will become the grounds not only of individuals but even of the families, the highly aspiring ones, of course, whose children too would look for the High Way. But without the Seed, the true foundationit is impossible.

...There is a special world here which you cannot find anywhere else except perhaps in another special world! This world transcends the things which are temporal. It touches the realm of the Forever. whose colours are so many. Every month is of a special colour, every one is unrepeatable. God bless every month. And every month leads to the formation of my "twelve." I have my month of April. Oh, the candidates, do pick your birth monthand come closer to my Ideal! Let at least one month a year be for you a perfect prayer and selfgiving!

Great things are never done publicly, loudly and demonstratively. Multitudes were never creative.... Ahh... The Twelve is about the limit!



GLOSSARY

Adharma-Unrighteousness.

Advaita-Nondualism.

AgniFire; -Light; the God of Light.

Ahimsa-Nonviolence; noninjury of any living being by thought, word or deed.

Ajapa-Silent repetition of the Divine Name without uttering words; mystical japa.

Ajna Chakra-Third Eye or Divine Eye, located between the eyebrows; the eye of intuition.

Ajnana-Lack of spiritual Knowledge; Avidya; Ignorance.

Artha-Wealth.

Asana-Body postures as practiced in Hatha Yoga.

Ashram-Retreat for the practicing of spiritual disciplines.

Astral-Pertaining to supraphysical substance; "The world of lights," next above the physical realm.

Asura-Demon; diabolical tendencies in man are "asuric."

Atma -The Soul; the Self.

Aura-A subtle invisible emanation.

Avatars -Realized Soul; the Divine descent into human plane.

Avidya - Ignorance.

Bala Lila-The play of the Divine Child..

Bhagavad Gita-The "Song of God"; classical Hindu Scripture, the source of Wisdom and Truth.

Bhakti Yoga-The Yoga of Divine Love; devotion and adoration leading to eventual union with the Beloved.

Bhava-State of feeling; attitude of mind.

Bhoga-Enjoyment.

Brahma-Creator God; first Person of the Hindu Trinity.

Brahmachari-Celibate; one who lives in purity and study of Spiritual Wisdom.

Brahmacharia-Celibacy; purity of mind, body, word, thought, deed; also sex sublimation.

Brahmaloka-the realm of Brahma, the Creator.

Brahmamuhurta-the hour of Brahma; the spiritual period before sunrise.

Brahman-God; Universal Soul or Absolute Reality

Brahmani- Sakti of Brahma.

Brahma- Sakti Divine Power,

brahmin -spiritual caste established in ancient Hindu society, still exists but not in its original form.

Buddha- The Enlightened One.

Buddhi -Intelligence; higher discriminative faculty:

Buddhi- Sakti The power of mind.

chakra -Plexus center of psychic energy.

darshan -Vision; proximity; appearance.

Deiva-DeivayanaDaughter of Indra; one of the Saktis of Lord Skanda.

Devas -Shiny ones; divine beings.

Devi -The Divine Mother.

Dhamma-Buddhist term meaning the very essence of mental and physical phenomena.

Dharma-Righteousness; uprightness; conscience.

Durga, Kali or Parvati -The Energy aspect of Siva.

Gunas-Qualities; elements; according to Hindu philosophy, the whole nature consists of three forces or elements or qualities: Tamas, Rajas, Sattwa.

Guru -Spiritual Preceptor.

Guru -BhaktiAdoring devotion to Guru.

Guru Kripa-Guru's Grace.

Hanuman-A powerful deity in the form of a monkey; a great devotee of Rama.

Hatha Yoga-A system of Yoga for gaining control over physical body.

himsa;- ahimsaInjury; noninjury.

Hiranyagarbha-Cosmic Intelligence; the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

Indra-The Lord of the senses; Deity in charge of devas.

Indriyas-Sense organs.

Ishta Devata-Chosen Ideal.

Japa-Repetition of Mantra; repetition of the Lord's Name.

Jiva-Individual soul.

Jivanmukta-Liberated Soul. JnanaSpiritual Knowledge.

Kali-Darkness; evil.

Kali Yuga-One of the four Yugas or cycles in which there is a minimum of virtue and an excess of vice and lust.

Kama-Lust; desire.

Karma-The Law of Cause and Effect.

Karma Yoga-Path of action; purified, selfless service dedicated to the Lord.

Kirtan-Singing of the Lord's Glories, of the Lord's Name, with great feeling.

Krishna-Incarnation of Vishnu; full Avatara; God.

Kundalini-Psychic power; energy residing in the astral form of a coiled serpent in human body at the base of the spinal column.

Lakshmi-Protector and preserver aspect of the Divine Mother trinity; the Sakti of Lord Vishnu.

Likhita Japa-Mantra writing.

Lila-Divine sport.

Maha-Great.

Maha Mantra-The "Great Mantra"; sixteen Names of the Godhead; the Mantra of Hari is considered Maha Mantra.

Maha Samadhi-Literally great sleep, referring to the final deliverance, liberation of the Soul.

Mahatmas-Great Souls.

Mala-Rosary of 108 beads used for repetition of the Mantra and prayers.

Mantra-Sacred word; formula or affirmation which is associated with God or Divine Ideas. Also the invocation of the supraphysical forces.

Mara-Buddhist terminology for Temptress; Maya; the devil.

Maya-The Cosmic Illusion; ignorance of man prompted by the devil and which prevents man from seeing God. According to Vedanta philosophy, the whole manifested world is illusion, halfreal phenomenon; the Real is only the Absolute.

Moha-The tendency of the lower human nature to be attached to the things that "belong" to it; infatuation.

Mouna-Silence.

Mukti-Liberation.

Muladhara Chakra- The Chakra located at the base of the spine where the

Kundalini - Sakti lies dormant.

Muni- Sage, wise man.

Murugan- Tamil name for the Lord Skanda; eternally youthful one; adorably beautiful, etc.

Nada- Mystic sound on which yogi concentrates.

Nada Yoga- the Yoga of sound.

Nadi – Nerve channel; psychic corner.

Narayani- Lakshmi; the Divine Energy of Narayan; the Lord Vishnu.

Nirvana- Buddhist term; Liberation; Enlightenment; Emancipation.

Nisumbha - Great asura slain by the Divine Mother.

niyama - The forming up of habits which will enable one to practice; it includes purity, contentment, austerity, study, selfsurrender and constant remembrance of the Lord.

Ojas-Vigour; spiritual energy resulting from sex control and sublimation.

Om-The sacred syllable; sound symbol of God; the Absolute.

Om Namah Sivaya-Mantra meaning, "Prostrationa unto Lord Siva."

Para Brahman -Supreme Reality; God the Absolute.

Patala -Netherland.

Prakriti-Mother Nature; the creative energy; causal matter.

Prana-Vital energy; lifeforce.

Pranayama-Control and regulation of vital force through breathing.

Prasad-Consecrated offering to gods at their worship.

Pretaloka-The plane where, after death, the disembodied man who has spent his life in indulgences goes and is consumed by the unfulfilled desires.

Pundits-Learned men; intellectuals.

Raja Yoga -"Royal Yoga"; consists of three main stages: concentration, meditation, Samadhi.

RajasGuna- manifesting as restlessness, passion, Impulse.

Ramayana-Hindu epic dealing with the life of Lord Rama.

Ravana-Great asura slain by Rama.

Rishis-Sages, ancient seers, wise men.

Rudra-Another Name for Lord Siva.

Rudrakshas-Prayer beads sacred to Lord Siva.

Sadhaka-One who practices Sadhana; aspirant.

Sadhana-Spiritual discipline.

Sadhana -SaktiPower to practice Sadhana.

Sadhus-Holy men of India.

Sahasrara-Cerebral cortex; chakra at the top of the head; site of the "thousand petalled lotus."

Sakta-Worshipper of Sakti or Divine Energy.

Sakti-Divine Energy.

Samadhi-Superconscious state of mind manifesting as ecstatic communion with God.

Samsara-The wheel of birth and death.

Samskara-Subtle impression.

Sannyasin-Indian renunciate.

Saraswati -Enlightener aspect of the Divine. Mother Trinity, Sakti of Lord Brahma.

Sat -Infinite, eternal Truth, the Supreme Being.

satsang -Association with the pure and holy,

Sattwa- Guna manifesting as light, harmony, peace and wisdom.

Satya -Truth.

siddhis -Psychic powers.

Siva -Destroyer God: Third Person of the Hindu Trinity,

Sumbha- Great asura slain by Devi.

Surapadma- Asura slain by Skanda.

Surya- The Sun God.

Tamas- Guna manifesting as dullness, inertia, sloth, stupidity.

Tapas- Control; voluntary austerities.

Tat Twam Asi -Mantra meaning "That Thou Art."

Upanishads - The conclusive portion of the Vedas.

Vairagya - Dispassion; equal vision; renunciation; indifference to carnal pleasure; distaste for worldly life.

Valli-Second Sakti of Lord SkandaWill.

vasanas -subtle desires not yet materialized into concrete thoughts. Vedanta The end of the Upanishads; the doctrine of nondualism.

Vedas -Most ancient Scriptures of the world, considered to be without authorship of man, thought to be given to humanity by God Himself.

Veerya-Hormonal energy.

Vichara-Enquiry of "Who am I?"

Vishnu -Preserver God; Second Person of Hindu Trinity.

Viveka-Discrimination.

Yajna-Sacrificial offering to God.

Yama-The God of Death.

Yamanyama-Preliminary disciplines of Raja Yoga.

Yoga-Union of the individual soul, (jiva), with the Universal Soul.

Yoganidra - half contemplation, half sleep; light yogic slumber.

Yogishwara-Lord of YogaKrishna.

Yuga -Division of time.

RELIGION SPIRITUALITY



In the *Wings of Sivananda-Valentina*, our Holy Mother shares Her Heart and Wisdom with devotees and students who seek to expand their consciousness through the practice of Yogic spiritual disciplines at Her Retreat, The Light of Sivananda-Valentina.

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ISBN 0-595-37534-0
52195
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$21.95 U.S.

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